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SALE OF

A FAMOUS "STRAD."—The musical world will be interested to learn that the famous Alard "Strad" known as "Le Messie" has been added to the many magnificent specimens of the great master's work already owned in the United Kingdom. It has just been purchased by Messrs. Hill and Sons, of New Bond-street. This violin, which is so perfect in condition and workmanship—it is dated 1716, and therefore belongs to the "grand" period of Stradivari's work—as to deserve the epithet of "unique," must be familiar to English connoisseurs, who in 1872 had abundant opportunity of studying it at the exhibition of musical instruments at South Kensington, to which it was sent by its then owner, M. Vuillaume, the well-known maker of Paris. The instrument, which is described in the catalogue of the exhibition as being the only one which has come down to us in a condition of perfect preservation, was bought in 1760 by a distinguished Italian amateur, Count Cozio di Salabrie, after whose death it was purchased, in 1824, by the famous collector, Luigi Tarisio. Tarisio hid it away, refusing to let anyone see it, till his death in 1854. A year later it was, together with many more instruments collected by Tarisio, purchased from his heirs by the late M. Vuillaume. Its condition of preservation was then found to be such as to warrant the belief that it had scarcely been played upon during the whole one hundred and fifty years of its existence. M. Vuillaume, who could not bring himself to part with the treasure, left it, on his death, to his son-in-law, M. Alard, the well-known French violinist, and the happy possessor of many rare and valuable instruments by the greatest makers. Now, as already stated, it is to be brought to England; its ultimate destination, we believe, being to enrich the collection of a distinguished and wealthy amateur north of the Tweed. When it was on exhibition at South Kensington, "Le Messie" was estimated by a man whose judgment in such matters was worthy of respect—the late Charles Reade—to be worth 600*l*. After the death of M. Alard it passed into the hands of his son-in-law, M. Croue, who has sold it for 2000*l*.—the largest price ever paid as yet

THE VIOLIN:

SOME ACCOUNT OF THAT

LEADING INSTRUMENT,

AND ITS

MOST EMINENT PROFESSORS,

FROM ITS EARLIEST DATE TO THE PRESENT TIME;

WITH

HINTS TO AMATEURS, ANECDOTES, ETC.

BY

GEORGE DUBOURG.

FOURTH EDITION,

REVISED AND CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED.

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PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

After a lapse of nearly sixteen years since this little work first appeared in print, I have been called upon to prepare it anew for the press, incorporating with it the additional matter necessary for the extension of the subject to the present time.

My new readers may like to know, at the outset, what is the intended scope of the following pages. This is soon explained. My object has been to present to the cultivators of the Violin, whether students or proficients, such a sketch (however slight) of the rise and progress of that instrument, accompanied with particulars concerning its more prominent professors, and with incidental anecdotes, as might help to enliven their interest in it, and a little to enlarge what may be called their *circumstantial* acquaintance with it. This humble object has not been altogether, I trust, without its accomplishment;—and here, while commending my renovated manual to the indulgent notice of the now happily increasing community of violin votaries, I would not forget to acknowledge, gratefully, the liberal and generous appreciation with which, when it first ventured forth, it was met by the public press, and introduced into musical society.

G. D.

Brighton, August, 1852.

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THE VIOLIN,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGINAL AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE VIOLIN.

First seat him somewhere, and derive his race.—DRYDEN.

THE Fiddle Family, like other tribes that have succeeded in making a noise in the world, has given exercise to the ingenuity of learned theorists and time-seekers, who have laboured to discover for it an origin as remote from our own era, as it is, I fear, from any kind of truth. It has probably been conceived that the Fiddle, associated as he has been, from generation to generation, with jigs, country-dances, fairs, junketings and other rusticities, had descended too low in the scale of society —that he had rendered himself, as Shakspeare for a while did his own genius, "stale and cheap to vulgar company"—and that he required to be reminded of his primitive dignity, and of his very high ancestral derivation —if he *had any*. This latter point was of course to be first established; but, as your zealous antiquary is a

wholesale dealer in time, and is never at a loss for a few centuries to link his conjectures to, the matter was easy enough; indeed, the more doubtful, the better, since doubt is the very life of theory. Accordingly, we have been invited to fall back upon "the ancients," and to recognize the *Epigonion* as the dignified and classic prototype of our merry and somewhat lax little friend, the Fiddle. To certain ancient Greek tablets relative to music, which have been somewhere brought to light, Professor Murchard has minutely assigned the date of 709 years before the Christian era; and the following passage, Englished from his translation, is stoutly alleged by the antiquarian advocates of the glories of the violin race:—"But Pherekydes began the contest, and sat himself down before all the people, and played the *Epigonion;*—for he had improved the same; and he stretched four strings over a small piece of wood, and played on them with a smooth stick. But the strings sounded so, that the people shouted with joy."

This is plausible enough, but far from conclusive. It is but the outline of a description, and admits of various modes of filling up. *If* the instrument partook *at all* of the violin character, it might seem, from the reference which its name bears to the *knees*, to have been the rude progenitor of either the double-bass or the violoncello, which have both, as is well known, their official post between the knees: but then, the prefix of ἐπί would denote that it was played *upon* the knees of the artist. "Very well," says the antiquarian; "it was a fiddle *reversed*." "Nay, Dr. Dryasdust, if you yourself *overturn* what you are about, I have no need to say more." *Au reste*, let any body stretch four strings over a small piece of wood, and play on them with a smooth stick, and then take account of what it

comes to. No, no; whatever the *Epigonion* may have been to the Greeks, he is nothing to *us:* he may have been a respectable individual of the musical genus of *his* day, when people blew a shell or a reed, and called it music; but we cannot for a moment receive him as the patriarch of the Fiddle Family. As soon should we think of setting up Pherekydes against Paganini.

Dismissing the Epigonion, we come to the *Semicon*, another pretender of Greek origin. This also, we are farther told, was a *kind of violin:* but we deny that he was father to the *violin kind.* The Semicon is said to have been played on with a bow; and yet a learned German (Koch), in the fulness of his determination to have *strings* enough to his bow, has claimed no less than thirty-five, as the complement of the Semicon. How could any bow pay its devoirs distinctly to thirty-five strings? Here, then, the dilemma is this: either to translate the thing in question into a *bow* is to *traduce* the term, or else the *strings* are an impertinence. *Utrum horum mavis, accipe.*

If the word *plectrum* could, by any ingenuity, be established to mean *a bow*, quotations enough might be accumulated to prove that instruments played with bows had their origin in a very remote period. But the translation of the word into *a bow, or such like thing*, as we find it in the Dictionaries, arises simply from the want of a known equivalent—a deficiency which makes it necessary to adopt any term that offers even the shadow of a synonym.

It has been stated, on the authority of a passage from Euphorion's book on the Isthmian Games, that there was an ancient instrument called *magadis*, which was surrounded by strings; that it was placed upon a pivot, upon which it turned, whilst the performer touched it

with *the bow* (or, at least, the *plectrum*); and that this instrument afterwards received the name of *sambuce*.

The hieroglyphics of Peter Valerian, page 628, chap. 4, present the figure of a muse, holding, in her right hand, a kind of bass or contra-violin, the form of which is not *very* unlike that of our violins or basses.

Philostratus, moreover, who taught at Athens, during the reign of Nero, gives a description of the lyre, which has been thus translated:—

"Orpheus," he says, "supported the lyre against his left leg, whilst he beat time by striking his foot upon the ground; in his right hand he held *the bow*, which he drew across the strings, turning his wrist slightly inwards. He touched the strings with the fingers of his left hand, keeping the knuckles perfectly straight."

From this description (if *bow* it could be called, which bow was none), it would appear as if the lyre to which Philostratus alludes were, forsooth, the same instrument which the moderns call the *contra-violin*, or *viola di gamba!* To settle the matter thus, however, would be *indeed* to beg the question.

As before observed, the word *plectrum* is, in the dictionaries, translated by *bow;* but, even if this were a warranted rendering of the word, it remains to be ascertained not only whether the bows of the ancients were of a form and nature corresponding with ours, but also whether they were used in the modern *way*. Did the ancients strike their bow upon the strings of the instrument—or did they draw forth the sound by means of friction? These questions are still undecided; but opinions preponderate greatly in favor of the belief that the plectrum was an implement of *percussion*, and therefore not at all a bow, in our sense.

A recent French writer, Monsieur C. Desmarais, in

an ingenious inquiry into the Archology of the Violin, takes us back to the ancient Egyptians, to whom he assigns the primitive violin, under the name of the *chélys*, and suggests that its *form* must have resulted from a studious inspection of one of the heavenly constellations!

M. Baillot, in his Introduction to the *Méthode de Violon du Conservatoire*, speculating on the origin of the instrument, has a passage which, in English, runs thus:—

"It is presumed to have been known from the remotest times. On ancient medals, we behold Apollo represented as playing upon an instrument with three strings, similar to the violin. Whether it be to the God of Harmony that we should attribute the invention of this instrument, or whether it claim some other origin, we cannot deny to it somewhat that is divine.

"The form of the violin bears a considerable affinity to that of the lyre, and thus favors the impression of its being no other than a lyre brought to perfection, so as to unite, with the facilities of modulation, the important advantage of expressing prolonged sounds—an advantage which was not possessed by the lyre."

This is pretty and fanciful, but far too vague to be at all satisfactory. Apollo might appear to play on an instrument, in which antiquarian ingenuity might discover some latent resemblance to the violin; but where was his *bow?* M. Baillot has not ventured to assert that he had one—and we may safely conclude that he had *not*, if we except the bow that was his admitted attribute. As for the affinity to the lyre, it is indeed as faint as the most determined genealogist, studious of an exercise, could wish.

It has been remarked, by some curious observer, that,

among the range of statues at the head of the canal at Versailles, an Orpheus is seen (known by the three-headed dog that barks between his legs), to whom the sculptor has given *a violin*, upon which he appears scraping away with all the furor of a blind itinerant. But is the statue, or its original, an antique? We may rest in safe assurance that it is a modern-antique; as much so, as the ingenious figment of Nero's *fiddling* a capriccio to the roaring accompaniment of the flames of Rome!

As for the *fidicula* of the Romans (or rather, of the Latin Dictionary), it is evidently, as far as it has been made to apply to the fiddle, no legitimate family name. The *violin* very positively disowns all relationship with it, and leaves it to settle its claims with the *guitar*.

As far as the *mere name* goes, however, it is not impossible that a connection may exist, and that the word-hunting Skinner may be right in deriving the Anglo-Saxon word *fithele* from the older German *vedel*, and thence from the Latin *fidicula*, which, it is hardly necessary to state, was any thing but a fiddle, and therefore "had no business" to lend its appellation in the way here noticed.

On the whole, as regards the pretensions alleged on the side of the ancients for the honor of having had the violin in existence among them, it may be safely remarked, that, if nothing like the *bow*, which is obviously connected most essentially with the expression and character of the violin, can be traced to their days, the violin itself, *à fortiori*, cannot be said to have belonged to them; and all those questionable shapes which have been speculatively put forward as possible fiddles, must be thrown back again into the field of antiquarian conjecture, to await some other appropriation. The follow-

ing remarks by Dr. Burney may be taken as a fair summary of all that needs to be observed on this head:

"The ancients seem to have been wholly unacquainted with one of the principal expedients for producing sound from the strings of modern instruments: this is the *bow*. It has long been a dispute among the learned whether the violin, or any instrument of that kind, as now played with a *bow*, was known to the ancients. The little figure of Apollo, playing on a kind of violin, with something *like* a bow, in the Grand Duke's *Tribuna* at Florence, which Mr. Addison and others supposed to be antique, has been proved to be *modern* by the Abbé Winkelmann and Mr. Mings: so that, as this was the only piece of sculpture reputed ancient, in which any thing like a bow could be found, nothing more remains to be discussed relative to that point."—(*Hist. of Music*, 4to. vol. i, p. 494.)

The Welch, who are notoriously obstinate genealogists, have not failed to mark the Fiddle for *their* own, and to assign him an origin, at some very distant date, among their native mountains. In support of this pretension, they bring forward a very ugly and clownish-looking fellow, with the uncouth name of *crwth*. This creature certainly belongs to them, and is so old as to have sometimes succeeded in being mistaken, in this country, for the father of the violin tribe—a mistake to which the old English terms of *crowd* for fiddle, and *crowder* for fiddler, seem to have lent some countenance. A little investigation, however, shows us that it was merely the name, and not the object itself, that we borrowed, for a time, from our Welch neighbours; and that, by a metonymy, more free than complimentary, we fastened the appellation of *crowd* upon the *violin*, already

current among us by transmission from the continent. The confusion thence arising has occasioned considerable misapprehension: nor has the effect of it been limited to our own island boundaries; for a French writer, M. Fétis, in one of his Letters on the State of Music in England, reports the error, without any apparent consciousness of its being such. Let us quote his passage in English:

"The *cruth* is a bowed instrument, which is thought to have been the origin of the viola and violin. Its form is that of an *oblong square*, the lower part of which forms the body of the instrument. It is mounted with four strings, and played on like a violin, but is more difficult in the treatment, because, not being hollowed out at the side, there is no free play for the action of the bow."

"What!" exclaims the enquiring virtuoso, "is this box of a thing, this piece of base carpentry, this formal oblong square, to be supposed the foundation of that neat form and those graceful inflections which make up the 'complement externe' of what men call the violin? Can dulness engender fancy—and can straight lines and right angles have for their lineal descendant the 'line of beauty?'" The soberest person would answer, this is quite unlikely; the man of taste would deny it to be in the nature of things. No, no; our Cambrian codger *may* have been a tolerable subject in his way—a good fellow for rough work among the mountains, and instrumental enough in the amusement of capering rusticity—but he must not be allowed, bad musician though we freely admit he may have been, to give himself *false airs*, and to assume honors to which his form and physiognomy give the lie. Let him be satisfied to be considered "*sui*

generis," unless he would rashly prefer illustrious illegitimacy, and be styled the *base violin*.*

If we were disposed, in England proper, to get up a claim for the first local habitation afforded to the violin, *we* might put together a much better case for the instrument that was familiar to the Anglo-Saxon gleemen, as early as the 10th century, than can be shown in behalf of the candidate just dismissed. We could produce an individual that should display a far better face, and should appear with, at least, no great disgrace to the Fiddle Family, though bearing about him none of the refinements of fashion. It may be as well to exhibit him at once :—

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* M. Cartier, Musicien de la Chapelle du Roi, announced for publication, several years ago, an " Essai Historique sur le Violon, et sur les progrès de l'Art Musical, depuis le moyen age." This announcement was accompanied by the following observations : — An Historical Essay upon the Violin may, at first sight, appear to many to possess but little interest. They will not readily believe that it is capable of exciting their liveliest curiosity, and of presenting an object of real utility, inasmuch as an attempt will be made to lead the mind from the mere mechanism of the art to a moral and scientific view of the subject, and to a consideration how far the *beau idéal* of music is indebted to the violin. The author proves that this instrument was unknown to *the ancients*, and derives its origin from the *Druids of Gaul*, from whom it afterwards passed to the bards of Scotland—that, from this obscure beginning, it made its way through the dark ages, with slow but certain success, till the beginning of the 17th century, when it attained the first rank among instruments."—(*Harmonicon*, 1827.) I have not been able to discover whether this promised treatise has yet seen the light. The idea of tracing the instrument to the *Druids of Gaul* seems more romantic than rational ; but it would be something gained for *la gloire de la France*, could such a theory be substantiated.

In this representation (borrowed from "Strutt's Sports and Pastimes of the People of England") we discern something which it is possible to call a fiddle, without much violence to our notions "de rerum naturâ." There is grotesqueness, but not deformity: there is much of the general character of the true violin, though some of its most particular beauties are wanting. It is true that the sound-holes look as if no notes save *circulars* were to be permitted to issue through them—that the tail-piece seems forced to do duty for a bridge—that the sides have no indented middle, or waist, to give the aspect of elegance, and accommodate the play of the bow over the two extreme strings—that the finger-board is non-existent—and that the scroll, that crowning charm of the fiddle's form, is but poorly made amends for by

the excrescent oddity substituted at the end of the neck. With all this, however, there *is* visible warrant for calling it a *sort* of fiddle. Though even a forty-antiquary power might fail to prove it the origin of the stock, it has claims to be regarded as exhibiting no very remote analogy to the violin; and thus far, therefore, it may defy the competition of the *Crwth*. Whether it was really born in Saxon England, however, or introduced from Germany, might be a point for nice speculation, were it worth while to agitate the enquiry.

Whither, then, are we to turn, after all, for the solution of this problem in musical genealogy? That the violin is of a respectable age, though not so old as what is commonly called antiquity, is a fact apparent to the least laborious of enquirers; and it seems to have been the practice, with those who have had occasion to touch on this point, either to announce the said fact simply, and leave the reader to make the most of it, or to mix up with it, by way of elucidation, some general remark about the absence of light on the matter. "The origin of the violin," observes one of these authorities, "like that of most of the several musical instruments, is involved in obscurity. As a species of that genus which comprehends the viola, violoncello, and violone, or double-bass, *it must be very ancient.*" Similarly indefinite are the conclusions of others who have approached the subject; so that it becomes necessary to dispense with such embarrassing aid, and to *help oneself* to the truth, if it is, peradventure, to be gathered. To me, much meditating on this matter (if I may borrow Lord Brougham's classic form of speech), there seems reason to fix on Italy as the quarter to which we must look for the "unde derivatur" required. Say, thou soft "Ausonia tellus," mother of inventions and nurse of the arts,—

say, soft and sunny Italy, is it not to *thee* that belongs the too modest merit of having produced and cherished the infancy, even as thou hast confessedly supported and developed the after-growth and advancement, of the interesting musical being whose history, in its more secret passages, we are here exploring? Is it a world (as Sir Toby feelingly asks), is it a world to hide virtues in? Well, if we cannot obtain *direct* satisfaction, let us pursue the investigation of our point a little more circuitously.

The perfect instrument which we now delight to honor by the name of the violin—the instrument complete in form and qualities—"totum in se teres atque rotundum"—appears to have been the result of a highly interesting series of improvements in the art of producing musical sounds from strings. How long a duration of time was occupied by the elaboration of these improvements respectively, is not readily to be ascertained, nor, perhaps, would the enquiry repay the trouble—but the general order of progression in the improvements themselves, is as clear as it is agreeable to contemplate. The first great advancement consisted in the *sounding-board*, by means of which invention a tone was produced, through the vibration of the wood, that was incomparably better and fuller than what was previously procured, through the mere vibration of the strings. As the human voice is evolved from the mouth under a concave roof, which serves it as a sounding-board, and gives additional grace and vigour to its inflections, so does the upper shell of the violin add a power of its own to the language of the strings. The next improvement in the instrument, thus extended in capability, was the *neck* or *finger-board*, which increased the range and variety of the sounds, by giving

to each string the power of producing a series of notes. The *bow* was the next great step of advancement; and this, like other important inventions, has provoked much learned dispute as to the time and place of its origin, which however we shall not here more particularly revert to, for indeed, "non nostrum tantas componere lites." With all these additions and appliances, we come not yet to the instrument *par excellence*, the true violin; for an intermediate and inferior state remains to be gone through. The consideration of that state brings us to the regular construction of the several instruments known by the general name of *viol* (for we pass by the *rebec*, as being only a spurious or illegitimate kind of fiddle), that were in the most common use during the 16th, and till about the middle of the 17th, century. These were similar to each other in form, but in size were distinguished into the treble-viol, tenor-viol, and bass-viol. They had six strings, and a finger-board marked with frets, like that of the lute or guitar*. Finally, as the crowning change, the glorious consummation, came the conversion of the *viol* into the *violin*, effected by a diminution of size, a reduction of strings, from six to four, and the abolition of those impediments to smoothness, and helps to irritation, the *frets*. The same reformation attended the other instruments of the viol tribe, which now became, *mutato nomine*, the viola and the violoncello.

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* In England, during the time here referred to, the instruments of the viol class were so much in favour that every considerable family had, as a necessary part of its establishment, a complete *chest of viols*, that is to say, a treble, tenor and bass-viol, each played with a bow, and bearing such proportion to one another as do the modern violin, tenor and violoncello.

In former days, we had the *viol* in,
'Ere the *true* instrument had come about:
But now we say, since *this* all ears doth win,
The *violin* hath put the *viol out*.

Thus, through a considerable tract of indefinite time, and a succession of definite changes, we reach the matured and accomplished instrument, the *Violin proper;* and then, if we recur to the question, to *whom* does it belong? the answer becomes less difficult. It is to this instrument, this perfected production, that the Italians may, I think, exultingly point as their own; and, in doing so, they may well afford to be indifferent to all disputes about the title to those earlier apparitions, those crude and half-made-up resemblances to the fiddle, that were but as the abortions which, in human experience, sometimes precede a perfect birth. It is of sufficient notoriety that the earliest instruments *of excellence,* bearing the name of Violin, as well as the earliest players of eminence, were Italian. The Cremona fiddles of Hieronymus Amati (to go no farther back) were sent into this breathing world about two centuries and a half ago; and Baltazarini, the earliest great player of the genuine Violin on record, is known to have been imported as a curiosity from Italy, by Catherine de Medicis, in 1577. It is tolerably clear, too, that, as a *court* favourite, the Violin began its career in Italy—its progress, in that capacity, having been, as Burney observes, from Italy to France, and from France to England.

But the tie of Italian connection may be drawn more closely than this. Galilei, in his Dialogues (p. 147), states that both the Violin and the Violoncello were *invented* by the Italians; and he suggests more precisely the Neapolitans, as the rightful claimants of this honor.

Dr. Burney, who does not attempt to settle the point, quotes the passage, to the above effect, from Galilei, and admits his own inability to confute it. Montagne, whose travels brought him to Verona in 1580, has recorded, that there were *Violins* as well as organs there, to accompany the mass in the great Church. Corelli's Violin, an instrument specially Italian, which afterwards passed into the possession of Giardini, was made in 1578, and its case was decorated by the master-hand of Annibale Caracci, probably several years *after* the instrument was finished; as Caracci at that date had numbered but eight of his own years.

Towards the end of the 16th century, the Violin is found indicated in some Italian scores, thus:—*piccoli Violini alla Francese;* which circumstance has been sometimes alleged as rendering it probable, that the reduction of the old viol or viola to the present dimensions of the Violin took place in *France*, rather than in Italy: but the fact does not seem to offer a sufficient basis for the conjecture, when it is considered that no instruments of French construction, corresponding with the Violin in its present form, and of as early a date as those which can be produced of Italian make, are known to exist. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that these *piccoli Violini*, or little Violins, were not identical with the Violin proper;—although Mr. Hogarth* (from whose respectable authority I am rather loth to differ) quotes the phrase as one tending to the support of the French claim. The term in question, which occurs, particularly, in Monteverde's Opera of *Orfeo*, printed at Venice in 1615, seems to me to imply merely some French modification of the already invented Italian model—a modi-

* "Memoirs of the Musical Drama."

fication applying to the size, and possibly also to some minor details in the form.

The French writer, Mersennus, who designates all instruments of the violin and viol class under the term *barbiton*, describes one of them, the least of the tribe, as the *lesser barbiton*. This latter was a small violin invented for the use of the dancing-masters of France, and of such form and dimensions as to be capable of being carried in a case or sheath in the pocket. It is the origin of the instrument which in England is called a *Kit*, and which is now made in the form of a violin.—Is it too great a stretch of conjecture, to hint, that this may, possibly, have been the kind of thing intended by the term above quoted ?

That curious enquirer, Mr. Gardiner, in his "Music of Nature," assigns to Italy the local origin of the Violin, but without placing the date as near to exactness as it might have been. He makes it to have been "about the year 1600." He might safely have gone thirty or forty years farther back, at least, notwithstanding that the shape of the instrument, towards the end of the 16th century, has been supposed, by Hawkins, to have been rather vague and undetermined*. The transition from the old shapes to the new *had* occurred, though it was as yet far from universal. It is sufficient that the change had commenced.

Admitting the genuine and perfect violin to be rightfully assignable to the Italians, it may be of some interest, now, to present a few more records relating, prin-

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* M. Baillot makes a somewhat longer draft upon the past tense; for he states, that for nearly *three hundred years* back there has been no change in the structure of the violin.—Introduction to the "Méthode de Violon du Conservatoire."

cipally, to the instrument in its *imperfect* character, when it bore only that sort of analogy to the true instrument, that the 'satyr' is said to have borne to 'Hyperion.'

The "Musurgia, seu Praxis Musicæ," of the Benedictine Monk Luscinius, published in 1542, represents (coarsely cut in wood) as the bowed instruments then in use, the *rebec*, or three-stringed violin, and the *viol di gamba*. The instruments of the viol tribe, however, which are supposed to have been those that led more immediately to the construction of the true violin, considerably precede the above period in their date of origin. *Violars*, or performers on the viol, whose business it was to accompany the Troubadours in their singing of the Provençal poetry*, were common in the 12th century; and, in a treatise on music, written by Jerome of Westphalia in the 13th century, there is particular mention made of the instrument known by the name of viol.

Under various modifications of the term *fiddle*, there are to be found many very early allusions to an instrument, such as it was, bearing some resemblance to the violin. *Fidle* is a Saxon word of considerable antiquity; and from the old Gothic are traced the derivations of

1. Middle High German. *Videl* (noun), *Videlære* (noun personal). *Videln* (verb, to fiddle), *Videl-boge* (fiddle bow).

* They who enjoy the advantage of access to curious books may see a figure of a Provençal Fiddler in "Diez, Poesie der Troubadour." Viol was the old Norman French name for the fiddle used by the minstrels of the middle ages, which was furnished variously with 3, 4, 5, or 6 strings. Viula was the Provençal term —and arson, or arçon, for the *bow*.

2. Icelandic. *Fidla.*

3. Danish. *Fedel.*

Then we have *Vedel, Veel, Viool* (Dutch); *Vedel, Vedele* (Flemish), *Fiedel, Fidel, Giege* (Modern German).

Fythele, Fithele,—and *Fythelers* (fiddlers) are alluded to in the Old English Romances. In the legendary life of St. Christopher, written about the year 1200, is this passage:—

> . . . . . Cristofre hym served longe;
> The Kynge loved melodye of *fithele* and of songe.

The poet Lidgate, at the beginning of the 15th century, writes of

> Instrumentys that did excelle,
> Many moo than I kan telle:
> Harpys, *Fythales*, and eke Rotys, &c.

Chaucer, in his "Canterbury Tales," says of the Oxford Clerk, that he was so fond of books and study, as to have loved Aristotle better

> Than robès rich, or *fidel*, or sautrie—

and his Absolon, the Parish-Clerk, a genius of a different cast, and exquisitely described, is a spruce little fellow, who sang, danced, and played on the species of fiddle then known. An instrument remotely allied to the fiddle—the *ribible*, a diminutive of *rebec*, a small viol with three strings—is also alluded to by Chaucer. Referring to a later period, there is evidence to show that an instrument of the violin kind was used in England before the dissolution of monasteries, in the time of our eighth Henry, in the fact that something similar to it in shape is seen depicted upon a glass window of the

chancel of Dronfield church, in the county of Derby; an edifice which was erected early in the sixteenth century.

At what period the *legitimate* violin may have found its way from Italy into this country, it would, I fear, be very difficult to ascertain with exactness; but it is easy to suppose that, when once that event had occurred, the neater shape and superior qualities exhibited by the new comer, would speedily render him the model for imitation, and lead to the multiplication of his species here, and to the displacement of the baser resemblances to him. The true instrument, however, was for a long while among us, ere its merits came into just appreciation. Until the period of the Restoration, it was held, for the most part, in very low esteem, and seldom found in less humble hands than those of fiddlers at fairs, and such like itinerant caterers of melody for the populace*. Its grand attribute, the superior power of expressing almost all that a human voice can produce, except the articulation of words, was at first so utterly unknown, that it was not considered a gentleman's instrument, or worthy of being admitted into "good company." The lute†, the harp, the viol, and theorbo, were in full possession of the public ear, and the poetic pen; nor has this latter authority ever been thoroughly propitiated by the later-born child of Melos, whose first screams on coming into the world may perhaps have irrecoverably alarmed the sensitive sons of Apollo. Moreover, poetry is ever apt to prefer the old to the new, and often recoils

* "It is a kinde of disparagement to be a cunning fiddler."—*Feltham.*

† The lute, of which hardly the shape, and still less the sound, are now known, was, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the favourite chamber instrument of every nation in Europe.

with distaste from what is modern. "Though the violin surpasses the lute," says a recent ingenius writer, "as much as the musket surpasses the bow and arrow, yet Cupid has not yet learned to wound his votaries with a bullet, nor have our poets begun to write odes or stanzas to their violins."

In the 39th Queen Elizabeth, a statute was passed by which "Ministrels, wandering abroad," were included among "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," and were adjudged to be punished as such. "This act," says Percy, in his Reliques of English Poetry, "seems to have put an end to the profession." That writer suggests, however, that although the character ceased to exist, the appellation might be continued, and applied to fiddlers, or other common musicians; and in this sense, he adds, it is used in an ordinance in the time of Cromwell (1656), wherein it is enacted that if any of the "persons commonly called *Fiddlers* or *Minstrels* shall at any time be taken playing, fiddling, and making music in any inn, alehouse, or tavern, or shall be taken proffering themselves, or desiring or intreating any . . . . . to hear them play or make music in any of the places aforesaid," they are to be "adjudged and declared to be rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars*." By a

* According to Strutt, the name of *fiddlers* was applied to the *minstrels* as early, at least, as the 14th century. "It occurs (says that writer) in the Vision of Pierce the Ploughman, where we read, 'not to fare as a fydeler, or a frier, to seke feastes.' It is also used, but not sarcastically, in the poem of Launfel:—

They had menstrelles of moche honours,
Fydelers, sytolyrs, and trompoters.

"I remember also (says Strutt) a story recorded in a manuscript, written about the reign of Edward III, of a young man of family, who came to a feast, where many of the nobility were pre-

similar change or declension, according to Mr. Percy, John of Gaunt's *King of the Minstrels* came, at length, to be called, like the *Roi des Violons* in France, *King of the Fiddles*—it being always to be borne in mind, nevertheless, that it was only as yet a baser kind of instrument which brought its professors into such *scrapes**.

The term *crowd*, as well as that of *fiddle*, was commonly used in England before the appearance of the perfect Violin, but appears to have been soon disused (along with the barbarous instrument it designated) after that period. Butler, in his "Hudibras," employs both terms indiscriminately, and seems to find enjoyment in linking them with mean and ludicrous associations—a tendency which must be allowed to have been quite in keeping with the feeling of the times he describes. His motley rabble, whom he puts in the way of the knight and his squire, were special affecters of the instrument he delights to dishonour,

> And to *crack'd fiddle*, and hoarse tabor,
> In merriment did drudge and labor.

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sent, in a vesture called a coat bardy, cut short in the German fashion, and resembling the dress of a minstrel. The oddity of his habit attracted the notice of the company, and especially of an elderly knight, to whom he was well known, who thus addressed him: "Where, my friend, is your fiddle, your ribible, or such-like instrument belonging to a minstrel?" "Sir," replied the young man, "I have no crafte nor science in using such instruments." "Then," returned the knight, "you are much to blame; for, if you choose to debase yourself and your family by appearing in the garb of a minstrel, it is fitting you should be able to perform his duty."

* The miserable state of itinerant fiddlers, and other musicians, is described by Putenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie*, printed in 1589; and Bishop Hall, the satirist, adverting to their low condition, describes them as

> Selling a laughter for a cold meale's meat.

He makes contemptuous allusion, also, to certain persons

> That keep their consciences in cases,
> As fiddlers do their *crowds* and bases.

Crowdero, the fiddle-noted agent in the story, is made to cut, on the whole, a very sorry figure. Thus, as to his instrument, and his manner of calling it into exercise:

> A *squeaking engine* he applied
> Unto his neck, on north-east side,
> Just where the hangman does dispose,
> To special friends, the knot of noose.

When the knight, in the outset of his career, meets the aforesaid rabble, with the aggravating accompaniment of the bear and fiddler, and counsels them to peace and dispersion, he says

> But, to that purpose, first surrender
> The fiddler, as the prime offender!

It is true that the mettle put forth by Crowdero, in the ensuing general fight, raises him a little out of the mire of meanness: but then, the weapon with which he batters the cranium of the prostrate Hudibras—to wit, his own wooden leg—has the effect of disturbing the small dignity which his gleam of valour might have shed over him; and, besides, he is speedily exhibited in reverse, being vanquished in turn by Ralpho the Squire, and forced into the ignominious confinement of the stocks; while Ralpho exultingly says to Hudibras, the fiddle is your *trophy*,

> And, by your doom, must be allow'd
> To be, or be no more, a crowd.

In France, certain ancient and respectable monu-

ments, and particularly a figure on the portico of the venerable Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris, representing King Chilperic with a sort of Violin in his hand, have been referred to as proofs that an instrument of this nature was very early held in esteem in that country; and the minstrels in the highest estimation with the public, were at all times the best *Violists* of their age. Among the instruments represented in the beautiful illuminations of the splendid copy of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, in the Bodleian library at Oxford, are Viols with three strings, played upon with a clumsy bow.

In Italy, as in France, the viol appears to have enjoyed earlier favour than in England, where the fiddle or *crowd* (the descendant, probably, of the Welsh instrument *crwth*) was its predecessor. The instruments chiefly used by the ladies and gentlemen in the Decameron, are the lute and the viol—upon which latter some of the *ladies* are represented as performing.

An ingenious Piedmontese, Michele Todini, published a pamphlet at Rome, 1676, wherein are described various musical inventions of his own, "of special merit, though of little note." Amongst them were two Violins, the pitch of one of which could, by an adroit mechanical contrivance, be at once heightened a whole tone, a third, or even a fifth; while the other, under the usual strings, had a second set of strings, like those of a kit, tuned in the octave above, and was so contrived that the Violin and kit might either be played separately, or both together, at the pleasure of the performer. In the 23rd Chapter of this little tract is a description of a *Viola di gamba*, so constructed, that, without shifting the neck, all the four kinds of Violins, namely, the treble Violin, the contralto (or *Viola bastarda*), and the tenor and

bass viol, could be played upon it. Todini had originally given the bass of this instrument an unusual depth; but he abandoned that, when he invented the *double bass*, —which instrument he was the first to introduce and play upon in oratorios, concerts, and serenades.

The arms and seal of the town of Alzei, in the neighbourhood of Worms, consist of a crowned lion rampant, holding a *fiddle* in his paws. The *fiddle* alone appears to have been the original bearing; for the palatine lion was first joined to the *fiddle* when Duke Conrad of Hohenstauffen was enfeoffed by the Emperor Frederick I with the Palatinate of the Rhine. His son-in-law, the Palsgrave Henry, calls the Steward (*Trucksess*) of Alzei, his vassal, in a bill of feoffment, dated in 1209, and in another document, 1211. This Steward, however, and Winter of Alzei, bore the *fiddle* as their arms. On account of these arms, the inhabitants of Alzei are mockingly called *fiddlers* by their neighbours*.

Connected with the history of the instrument in England, there is a curious old custom, now "invisible, or dimly seen," and I know not when commenced, which is thus described in Hone's Table Book :—

"The concluding dance at a country wake, or other general meeting, is the 'Cushion Dance;' and if it be not called for, when the company are tired with dancing, the *fiddler*, who has an interest in it, which will be seen

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* The learned Wilhelm Grimm, who quotes this curious record from *Storck*, *Darstellungen aus dem Rhein-und-Mosellande*, conceives that this armorial bearing fully explains the allusion to the fiddle of Volker, the accomplished musician and warrior in the old poem of the "Nibelungen Lied" (supposed of the 12th century), and forms a key to the enigma of his being exhibited in the joint capacity of champion and fiddler, and bearing his fiddle, that is, his *arms*, into the battle with him.

hereafter, frequently plays the tune to remind them of it. A young man of the company leaves the room, the poor young women, uninformed of the plot against them, suspecting nothing; but he no sooner returns, bearing a cushion in one hand and a pewter pot in the other, than they are aware of the mischief intended, and would certainly make their escape, had not the bearer of cushion and pot, aware of the invincible aversion which young women have to be saluted by young men, prevented their flight by locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket. The dance then begins.

"The young man advances to the fiddler, drops a penny in the pot, and gives it to one of his companions. Cushion then dances round the room, followed by pot, and when they again reach the fiddler, the cushion says, in a sort of recitative, accompanied by the music, 'This dance it will no farther go.'

"The fiddler, in return, sings or says (for it partakes of both), 'I pray, kind Sir, why say you so?'

"The answer is, 'Because Joan Sanderson won't come to.'

"'But,' replies the fiddler, 'she must come to, and she *shall* come to, whether she will or no.'

"The young man, thus armed with the authority of the village musician, recommences his dance round the room, but stops when he comes to the girl he likes best, and drops the cushion at her feet. She puts her penny in the pewter pot, and kneels down with the young man on the cushion; and he salutes her.

"When they rise, the woman takes up the cushion, and leads the dance, the man following, and holding the skirt of her gown; and, having made the circuit of the room, they stop near the fiddler, and the same dialogue is repeated, except that, as it is now the woman who

speaks, it is *John* Sanderson who won't come to, and the fiddler's mandate is issued to *him*, not to her.

"The woman drops the cushion at the feet of her favourite man: the same ceremony and the same dance are repeated, till every man and woman (the pot-bearer last) have been taken out, and all have danced round the room in a file. The *pence* are the perquisite of the *fiddler*. There is a description of this dance in Miss Hutton's 'Oakwood Hall.'"

Then follows, in Hone's Book, a further illustration of this curious custom, in "numerous verse"—but the prose account is here sufficient.

The dialogue in the old puppet dramas (says Strutt) were mere jumbles of absurdity and nonsense, intermixed with low immoral discourses passing between Punch and the fiddler, for the orchestra rarely admitted of more than one minstrel; and these flashes of merriment were made offensive to decency by the actions of the puppet. In the reign of James II, there was a noted merry-andrew named Philips; "This man," says Granger, "was some time fiddler to a puppet-show; in which capacity he held many a dialogue with Punch, in much the same strain as he did afterwards with the mountebank doctor, his master upon the stage. This zany, being regularly educated, had confessedly the advantage of his brethren."

The following may be seen in volume the 1st of Purcell's Catches, on two persons of the name of Young, father and son, who lived in St. Paul's Churchyard—The one was an excellent instrument-maker, and the other an excellent performer on the fiddle.

You scrapers that want a good fiddle, well strung,
You must go to the man that is old, while he's Young;

But if this same fiddle you fain would play bold,
You must go to his son, who'll be Young when he's old.
There's old Young and young Young, both men of renown,
Old sells, and Young plays, the best fiddle in town;
Young and old live together, and may they live long,
Young, to play an old fiddle; old, sell a new song!

The zealous, ingenious, minute and gossiping Anthony Wood, to whose journalizing propensity we are indebted for a free insight into the state of music at Oxford, during the time of the Civil War (when musical sounds were scarcely any where else to be heard in the kingdom), was an ardent admirer of the violin, while its admirers were yet scarce; and has left us, in his life, written by himself, some particulars relating to the instrument, that are too pleasant, as well as curious, to be here passed by. Let me introduce this quaint worthy, speaking of himself in the third person, and under the abridged designation of A. W.

In 1651, "he began to exercise his natural and insatiable genie to music. He exercised his hand on the violin, and, having a good eare to take any tune at first hearing, he could quickly draw it out from the violin, but not with the same tuning of the strings that others used. He wanted understanding, friends and money, to pick him out a good master; otherwise he might have equalled in that instrument, and in singing, any person then in the University. He had some companions that were musical, but they wanted instruction as well as he."

The next year, being obliged to go into the country, for change of air and exercise, with a view to rid himself of an ague, he states that "while he continued there, he followed the plow on *well*-days, and sometimes plowed: and, having had, from his most tender years, an

extraordinary ravishing delight in music, he practised there, without the help of an instructor, to play on the Violin. It was then that he tuned his strings in fourths, and *not* fifths, according to the manner; and having a good eare, and being ready to sing any tune upon hearing it once or twice, he could play it also in a short time, with the said way of tuning, which was never knowne before.

"After he had spent the summer in a lonish and retired condition, he returned to Oxon; and, being advised by some persons, he entertained a Master of Musick to teach him the usual way of playing on the violin, that is, by having every string tuned *five* notes lower than the one going before. The master was Charles Griffith, one of the musicians belonging to the City of Oxon, whom he then thought to be a most excellent artist: but when A. W. improved himself on that instrument, he found he was not so. He gave him 2*s*. 6*d*. entrance, *and so quarterly*. This person, after he had extremely wondered how he could play so many tunes as he did by *fourths*, without a director or guide, tuned his violin by *fifths*, and gave him instructions how to proceed, leaving then a lesson with him to practice against his next coming.

"Having, by 1654, obtained a proficiency in musick, he and his companions were not without silly frolicks, not now to be maintained."—What should these frolics be, but to disguise themselves in poor habits, and, like country fiddlers, scrape for their livings! After strolling about to Farringdon Fair, and other places, and gaining money, victuals and drink for their trouble, they were overtaken, in returning home, by certain soldiers, who forced them to play in the open field, and then left them

without a penny of payment*.—" Most of his companions would afterwards glory in this ; but *he* was ashamed, and could never endure to hear of it."

His record goes on to inform us that, by 1656, " he had a genuine skill in musick, and frequented the weekly meetings of musitians in the house of Will. Ellis, organist of St John's Coll. situated on that place whereon the theatre was built."—Here he gives a list of the usual company, who met and performed their parts on lutes and *viols :* among these, eight were gentlemen. " The musick-masters were, Will. Ellis, Bachelor of Music and owner of the house, who always played his part either on the organ or virginal : —Dr. John Wilson, the public Professor, the best at the lute in all England ; he sometimes played on the lute, but most presided (directed) the consort :—Curteys, a lutenist, lately ejected from some choir or cathedral church :—Thomas Jackson, a base-violist :—Ed. Low, the organist of Christ-church ; he played only on the organ ; so, when he played on that instrument, Mr. Ellis would take up the counter-tenor viol, if any person were wanting to perform that part : Gervace Littleton, a violist ; he was afterwards a singing man of St. John's Coll. :—Will. Glexney, who had belonged to a choire before the war ; he played well upon the base-viol, and sometimes sung his part :—

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* An adventure similar to this is related by Mr. G. F. Graham, of Edinburgh (who has made liberal comment on my little work, in " Tait's Magazine"), as having occurred to a deceased clergyman of the Church of Scotland, a keen fiddler, who, returning late one evening from a musical party, was met, on Leith Walk, by a number of tipsy sailors. They began to handle him rather roughly ; but, hearing the twang of his fiddle (which he had under his coat), they insisted upon his playing to them ; which he did, and kept them dancing for an hour. They parted from him in great good humour.

Proctor, a young man and a new comer :—John Packer, one of the university musitians. But Mr. Low, a proud man, could not endure any common musitian to come to the meeting, much less to play among them. Of this kind I must rank Joh. Haselwood, an apothecary, a starch'd formal clister-pipe, who usually played on the base-viol, and sometimes on the counter-tenor. He was very conceited of his skill (though he had but little of it), and therefore would be ever and anon ready to take up a viol* before his betters ; which being observed by all, they usually called him *Handlewood.* The rest were but beginners. Proctor died soon after this time; he had been bred up by Mr. John Jenkins, the mirrour and wonder of his age for musick, was excellent for the lyra-viol and division-viol, good at the treble-viol, and violin, and all comprehended in a man of three or four and twenty yeares of age. He was much admired at the meetings, and exceedingly pitied by all the facultie for his loss."

" A. W. was now advised to entertain one William James, a dancing-master, to instruct him on the violin, who, by some, was accounted excellent on that instrument, and the rather because it was said that he had obtained his knowledge in dancing and music in France. He spent, in all, half a yeare with him, and gained some improvement ; yet at length he found him not a compleat master of his facultie, as Griffith and Parker were not : and, to say the truth, there was no compleat master in Oxon for that instrument, because *it had not been hitherto used in consort* among gentlemen, only by common musitians, who played but two parts. The gentle-

* The readiness of an apothecary to *take up a viol* does not seem, after all, a thing so much out of course. The singularity is, rather, that he should be able to *make so little of it.*

men in private meetings, which A. W. frequented, played three, four, and five parts with viols*—as treble-viol, tenor, counter-tenor, and bass, with an organ, virginal, or harpsicon joined with them; and they esteemed *a violin* to be an instrument only belonging to a *common fiddler*, and could not endure that it should come among them, for feare of making their meetings to be vain and fiddling. But, before the restoration of King Charles II, and *especially after*, viols began to be out of fashion, and only violins used, as treble violin, tenor, and base violin; and the King, according to the French mode, would have *twenty-four violins* playing before him while he was at meals, as being more airie and brisk than *viols*."

Under the year 1658, he tells us that "Tho. Baltzar, a Lubecker borne, and the most famous artist for the violin that the world had yet produced (!), was now in Oxon, and this day, July 24, A. W. was with him, and Mr. Ed. Lowe, at the house of Will. Ellis. A. W. did then and there, to his very great astonishment, heare him play on the violin. He then saw him run up his fingers to the end of the finger-board of the violin, and run them back insensibly; and all with alacrity and *very good tune*, which he nor any in England saw the like before. A. W. entertained him and Mr. Low with what the house could then afford, and afterwards he in-

* The viol, less powerful and penetrating than its supplanter, the violin, was not without its recommendatory qualities. Hawkins speaks of "the sweet and delicate tone which distinguishes the viol species." Old Thomas Mace, who wrote when the viol was declining in fashion, was emphatic in its praise. "Your best provision," says he, "and most compleat, will be a good *chest of* viols; six in number, viz 2 basses, 2 tenors, and 2 trebles; all truly and proportionally suited."

vited them to the taverne ; but they being engaged to goe to other company, he could no more heare him play or see him play at that time. Afterwards he came to one of the weekly meetings at Mr. Ellis's house, and he played to the wonder of all the auditory, and exercising his finger and instrument several wayes to the utmost of his power. Wilson thereupon, the public Professor, the greatest judge of musick that ever was, did, after his humoursome way, stoope downe to Baltzar's feet, to see whether he had a huff (hoof) on, that is to say, to see whether he was a devil or not, because he acted beyond the parts of man."

" About this time it was that Dr. John Wilkins, warden of Wadham, the greatest *curioso* of his time, invited him (Baltzar) and some of the musitians to his lodgings in that Coll. purposely to have a consort, and to see and heare him play. The instruments and books were carried thither, but none could be persuaded there to play against him in consort on the violin. At length the company perceiving A. W. standing behind in a corner neare the dore, they haled him in among them, and play, forsooth, he must against him. Whereupon he, being not able to avoid it, took up a violin, as poor Troylus did against Achilles*. He abashed at it, yet honour he got by playing with and against such a grand master as Baltzar was."

The restoration of monarchy and episcopacy in England (observes Dr. Burney) seems to have been not only favorable to sacred music, but to secular ; for it may be ascribed to the particular pleasure which Charles II received from the gay and sprightly sound of the violin,

* According to this loose diction of honest Anthony's, it would appear as if Troylus and Achilles had exhibited a rivalry on the violin, like Lafont and Paganini !

that this instrument was introduced at Court, and the houses of the nobility and gentry, for any other purpose than country-dances, and festive mirth. Hitherto there seem to have been no public concerts; and, in the music of the chamber, in the performance of *Fancies* on instruments, which had taken place of vocal madrigals and motets, the violin had no admission, the whole business having been done by *viols*. Charles II, who, during the usurpation, had spent a considerable time on the continent, where he heard nothing but French music—upon his return to England, in imitation of Louis XIV, established a band of violins, tenors and bases, instead of the viols, lutes and cornets, of which the Court Band used to consist. Soon after the establishment of this band, Matthew Lock held the appointment of master to it; and the same title was conferred, about 1673, on Cambert, a French musician, who had preceded Lulli in composing for, and superintending, the Opera at Paris, and who came over to England after Lulli had obtained the transfer of his patent.

From this time, the Violin Family began to rise in reputation among the English, and had an honorable place assigned them, in the music of the Court, the theatres and the chamber; while the succession of performers and compositions, with which the nation was afterwards supplied from Italy and elsewhere, stimulated the practice and established the character of this class of instruments, which have ever since been universally acknowledged to be the pillars of a well-ordered orchestra, and more capable of perfect intonation, expression, brilliancy, and effect, than any other that have ever been invented. It should be observed, however, that, although the revival of the theatres at the Restoration was followed by the introduction of what were termed *act-tunes*

(short compositions played betwixt the acts of the drama), whereby the public services of the violin were brought into requisition, yet the state of dramatic music was, for some years, too low to admit of those services being very important. The music of the drama had attained scarcely any separate development, but was still confounded with that of the church, to the disadvantage of both. All the most noted composers for the theatre, for several years after the Restoration, were members of cathedral and collegiate churches—a circumstance which encouraged a jester, Tom Brown, to remark that "men of the musical profession hung betwixt the church and the play-house, like Mahomet's tomb betwixt two loadstones."

A general passion for the violin, and for pieces expressly composed for it, as well as a taste for Italian music, seem to have been excited in this country about the *end* of Charles the Second's reign, when French music and French politics became equally odious to a great part of the nation. The hon. Mr. North, who listened attentively to every species of performance, says that "the decay of French music, and favor of the Italian, came on by degrees. Its beginning was accidental, and occasioned by the arrival of *Nicola Matteis*; he was an excellent musician; performed wonderfully on the violin. His manner was singular; but he excelled, in one respect, all that had been heard in England before: his *arcata*, or manner of bowing, his shakes, divisions, and indeed his whole style of performance, was surprising, and every *stroke of his bow* was *a mouthful*. When he first came hither, he was very poor; but not so poor as proud, which prevented his being heard, or making useful acquaintance, for a long time, except among a few merchants in the City, who patronized him;

and, setting a high value on his condescension, he made them indemnify him for the want of more general favor. By degrees, however, he was more noticed, and was introduced to perform at Court. But his demeanor did not please, and he was thought capricious and troublesome, as he took offence if any one whispered while he played; which was a kind of attention which had not been much *in fashion* at our Court. It was said that the Duke of Richmond would have settled a pension upon him, though he wished him to change his manner of playing, and would needs have one of his pages show him a better. Matteis, for the sake of the jest, condescended to take lessons of the page; but learned so fast, that he soon outran him in his own way. But he continued so outrageous in his demands, particularly for his *solos*, that few would comply with them, and he remained in narrow circumstances and obscurity a long while; nor would his superior talents ever have contributed to better his fortune, had it not been for the zeal and friendly offices of two or three dilettanti, his admirers. These, becoming acquainted with him, and courting him in his own way, had an opportunity of describing to him the temper of the English, who, if humoured, would be liberal; but, if uncivilly treated, would be sulky, and despise him and his talents; assuring him that, by a little complaisance, he would neither want employment nor money. By advice so reasonable, they at length brought him into such good temper, that he became generally esteemed and sought after; and, having many scholars, though on moderate terms, his purse filled apace, which confirmed his conversion. After this, he discovered a way of acquiring money which was then perfectly *new* in this country: for, observing how much his scholars admired the lessons he

composed for them (which were all *duos*), and that most musical gentlemen who heard them wished to have copies of them, he was at the expense of having them neatly engraved on copper plates, in oblong octavo, which was the beginning of engraving music in England; and these he presented, well bound, to lovers of the art and admirers of his talents, for which he often received three, four and five guineas. And so great were his encouragement and profits in this species of traffic, that he printed four several books of *Ayres for the Violin*, in the same form and size."

Of the jealousy which attended the progress of the violin in public favor among the English, there occurs some amusing evidence in the "*Musick's Monument*" of that rich, exuberant and right pleasant egotist, Thomas Mace, published in 1676. This worthy, who exalted the lute and viol, his own peculiar instruments, looked with distrust on the growing importance and credit of that which had been before so imperfectly understood and insufficiently employed. In speaking of the instruments till then in chief use, and the propriety of balancing their relative proportions of sound in concerted pieces, he remarks, complainingly—"*the scoulding violins will out-top them all.*" In a sort of dialogue, in rhyme, between the author and his lamenting lute, he makes the latter exclaim :—

> The world is grown so slight! full of new fangles,
> And takes its chief delight in jingle-jangles,
> With *fiddle-noises*, &c.

CHAPTER II.

THE ITALIAN SCHOOL.

"Oh! known the earliest, and esteemed the most"

BYRON.

HAVING shown, on such evidence as I have been able to adduce, that the Italians are, most probably, the rightful claimants of the distinction which attaches to the *invention* of the modern or *true* violin, it is now to be considered by what bright array of names, by what successive efforts of skill and genius, they have likewise become entitled to the greater distinction of having been the first to develop the wonderful powers of the instrument, and the chief agents through whom its charming dominion in the realms of music was diffused, ere the great German composers, in more recent days, applied their powers to the extension and enrichment of the field for stringed instruments.

In casting a glance over the catalogue of bright Italian names, we find two, that demand to be especially noted for their great influence in advancing the progress of the "leading instrument," and that serve indeed to mark two main epochs in its history. These are Corelli and Viotti—the first constituting the head of the old school, the last that of the modern; and each (it may be parenthetically said) almost as interesting to

contemplate in personal character, as in professional eminence. The intermediate names, most entitled to attention, are Tartini, Geminiani and Giardini. These, with others of considerable celebrity, though of less effective influence in the formation of what we have designated the Italian School, will be here noticed critically and biographically, according to their several pretensions and proceedings. Before we come to Corelli, however, there are some few to be treated of in the character of his predecessors, and as having prepared the way for his more dignified and important career.

Baltazarini has been already designated as the earliest violin-player of real eminence that the annals of music present to notice. His celebrity was much extended by the transplanting of his talent into France, where he acquired the new appellation of De Beaujoyeux, by virtue of the delight he afforded to a people whose natural gaiety of temperament could not but assort happily with the lighter range of sounds so readily evoked from the violin. It was in 1577, that Baltazarini, with *a band of violins*, was sent from Piedmont by Marshal Brissac to Queen Catherine de Medicis, who appointed him her "Premier Valet de Chambre," and Master of her Band. France has reason to be grateful to his memory, and Italy may fairly be proud of it.

Giuseppe Guami, organist of Lucca Cathedral, who published, in 1586, some voluminous compositions belonging to the class of *cantiones sacræ*, or motetts, is cited by Draudius, in his "Bibliotheca Classica," as an excellent performer on the violin.

Another early violinist, Agostino Aggazzari, born of a noble family at Sienna, and a scholar of Viadana, appears to have been the first who introduced instrumental Concertos into the Church; though Dr. Burney

supposes that these Concertos must only be understood in the very qualified sense of *Salmi Concertati*, or psalms accompanied with violins; and he adds, that Concertos *merely* instrumental, either for the church or chamber, seem to have had no existence till about the time of Corelli.

Carlo Farina, of Mantua, who published, in 1628, a Collection of "Pavans and Sonatas" for the violin, is recorded by Walther (in his Musical Lexicon), as having figured in the service of the Elector of Saxony, as a celebrated performer on the instrument.

Michael Angelo Rossi, a composer, as well as an able violinist, signalized himself somewhat oddly at Rome, in 1632, by performing the part of Apollo, in a musical drama, with the violin as the expressive symbol and exponent of his melodial powers, *instead* of the classically attributed lyre. The strangeness of the anomaly was doubtless lost sight of amidst the enjoyment it was the means of conferring: nor would the example, were it taken up in our own times, by a competent artist, be likely to fail in producing a similar subserviency of taste to pleasure.

> If, in *these* days, the man who plays Apollo
> Like charms could conjure from the fiddle's hollow,
> *We*, too, should find the heaven-descended lyre
> Omitted "by particular desire!"
> And Phœbus, fitted with a fiddle so,
> Would dart fresh wonders from his newer *bow!*

Though there was only one violin employed (observes Dr. Burney) in the first operas by Jacopo Peri and Monteverde, yet, as the musical drama improved, and the orchestra was augmented, the superiority of that instrument was soon discovered by its effects, not only in the theatre, but in private performances; and the most emi-

nent masters, without knowing much of its peculiar genius or powers, thought it *no degradation* to compose pieces expressly for the use of its votaries. Among the most early of these productions, may be ranked the *Suonate per Chiesa* of Legrenzi, published at Venice, 1655; *Suonate da Chiesa e Camera,* 1656; *Una Mutu di Suonate* (a Variety of Sonatas), 1664; and *Suonate a due Violini e Violone,* 1677.

The next individual of eminence in connexion with the instrument is Giambattista Bassani, of Bologna, whose name derives additional lustre from his having been the violin-master of Corelli. Bassani was a man of extensive knowledge and abilities in his art, having been a successful composer for the church, the theatre and the chamber, between the years 1680 and 1703, as well as an excellent performer on the violin. His sonatas for that instrument, and his accompaniments for it to his masses, motetts, psalms and cantatas, manifest a knowledge of the finger-board and the bow, which appears in the works of no other composer anterior to Corelli; and the lovers of the pure harmony and simple melody of that admirable master, would still receive great pleasure from the performance of Bassani's sonatas for violins and a bass. Specimens of Bassani's music may be found in Latrobe's and Stephens's Selections.

The names of Torelli, Valentini, and the elder Veracini, may be dismissed with a brief mention; because, though of eminence in their day, they are not connected with any very marked influence on the art; and the published works which they have given to the world have long since attained a dormant state. It should be observed, however, as illustrating the very capricious nature of *fashion,* that Valentini for a while eclipsed Corelli himself in popularity.

Arcangelo Corelli, under whose able direction the violin may be said to have first acquired the definite character and regulated honors of *a school*,* was a native of Fusignano, a town situated near Imola, in the territory of Bologna, and was born in the month of February, 1653. His first instructor was Matteo Simonelli, by whom he was taught the rudiments of music, and the art of practical composition; but, the genius of Corelli leading him to prefer secular to ecclesiastical music, he afterwards became a disciple of Bassani.

Corelli entertained an early propensity for the violin, and, as he advanced in years, laboured incessantly in the practice of it. It has been said, though without authority, that, in the year 1672, he went to Paris, and was driven thence by the jealousy and violence of Lully, who could not brook so formidable a rival.

In 1680, he visited Germany, and met with a reception suitable to his merit, from most of the German princes, but particularly from the Elector of Bavaria, in whose service he was retained, and continued for some time. After a few years' residence abroad, he returned to Rome, and there pursued his studies with

* That the Italians (says M. Choron) have perfected every sort of vocal composition, is generally agreed; but a fact which is apt to be overlooked, is that they have been the instructors of all Europe in instrumental composition, and that to them we are indebted for the first and most esteemed models in that department of the art. It is the Italians who invented all the various kinds of instrumental music which we have called single pieces or solos, from the sonata to the concerto. In violin music, Corelli, Tartini, and their pupils, preceded the composers of all the other nations of Europe, to whom they have served as models. The same may be said with regard to the harpsichord, from Frescobaldi to Clementi. All other single pieces have been constructed on the model of the compositions for the two instruments just named.

assiduity. It was at Rome that he published (about 1683) his first *twelve Sonatas*. In 1685, the second set appeared, under the title of *Balletti da Camera*. In 1690, he gave to the press the third "Opera" of his Sonatas; and in 1694, the fourth, which, consisting of movements fit for *dancing*, like the second, he called *Balletti da Camera*. This species of instrumental composition, the sonata, first imagined in the course of the 17th century, has been fixed, in many respects, by Corelli.

The proficiency of Corelli on his favourite instrument became so great, that his fame was extended throughout Europe, and the number of his pupils grew very considerable; for, not only his own countrymen, but even persons from distant kingdoms, resorted to him for instruction, as the greatest master of the violin that had, at that period, been heard of in the world. It does not appear, indeed, that he had attained a power of *execution* in any degree comparable to that of later professors. The style of his performance was, however, learned, elegant, and occasionally impressed with feeling; while his *tone* was firm and even. Geminiani, who was well acquainted with it, used expressively to compare it with that of a sweet trumpet. One of those who heard him perform, has stated that, during the whole time, his countenance was distorted, his eyes were as red as fire, and his eye-balls rolled as if he were in agony. This was the enthusiasm of genius—the influence of the "præsens divus," Apollo—the exalted state so well characterized by the poet's exclamation,

"Est Deus in nobis—agitante calescimus illo!"

About the year 1690, the Opera had arrived at a flourishing state in Rome; and Corelli led the band as

principal Violin*. It was not till ten years after this date, that he published his *Solos*,† the work by which he acquired the greatest reputation during his life-time, and to which, in its established character of a text-book for students, the largest share of attention on the whole has been directed. It was the fifth in the series of his publications, and was issued at Rome under the following title:—Sonate a Violini e Violone o Cimbalo: Opera

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* At the time of Corelli's greatest reputation, Geminiani asked Scarlatti what he thought of him. The man of hard learning replied that "he found nothing greatly to admire in his composition, but was extremely struck with the manner in which he played his concertos, and his nice management of his band, the uncommon accuracy of whose performance gave the concertos an amazing effect, even to the *eye*, as well as to the ear; for (as Geminiani explained) Corelli regarded it as essential to a band that their bows should all move exactly together, *all up*, or *all down*; so that, at his rehearsal, which constantly preceded every public performance of his Concertos, he would immediately stop the band, if he saw an irregular bow.

We may smile a little at Scarlatti's criticism; but the smile may extend at the same time to the quaint precision of the Corellian custom it notices;—a custom which suggests the idea of military mechanism, as well as military time; or rather, which reminds us, in a still more lively manner, of the old nursery pæan.

Here we go up, up. up,
And here we go down, down, downy!

Scarlatti (it may be here observed) was the first who introduced into his airs, accompaniments for the violin, as well as bits of symphony;—thus both enriching the melody, and giving relief to the singer.

† The only English editions of the above-named works are those published by Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co.; one of which editions is printed from the original plates of copper, which formed part of the stock of Walsh, who printed for Handel.

Quinta, Parte prima, Parte seconda: Preludii, Allemande, Correnti, Ighe, Sarabande, Gavotte, e Follia." This work was dedicated to Sophia Charlotte, Electress of Brandenburgh; and it was these Solo Sonatas that the author himself was accustomed to perform on particular occasions.

Corelli's great patron at Rome was Cardinal Ottoboni, the distinguished encourager of learning and the polite arts, to whom, in 1694, he dedicated his Opera Quarta,* and in whose palace he constantly resided, "col spezioso carrattere d'attuale Servitore" of his Eminence, as he expresses himself in the dedication—with more of the humility of gratitude, by the by, than of the independence of genius. Crescembini, speaking of the splendid and majestic "Academia," or Concert, held at Cardinal Ottoboni's every Monday evening, observes that the performance was regulated by Arcangelo Corelli, that most celebrated professor of the violin —"famosissimo professore di violino." Another title, expressive of the high consideration in which he was held by his contemporaries, is that applied to him by Francesco Gasparini, who calls him "Virtuosissimo di violino, e vero *Orfeo* di nostro tempo."

It was at Cardinal Ottoboni's that Corelli became acquainted with Handel, of whom the following anecdote is related. On one of the musical evenings given there, a Serenata, written by the latter, entitled *Il Trionfo del Tempo*, was ordered to be performed, out of compli-

* Burney has made the mistake of stating that the work dedicated to the Cardinal was the *Opera Quinta*; and, although this was obviously a mere slip of the pen, carrying with it its own contradiction, it is curious to observe with what easy acquiescence the successive English Compilers have reprinted the error.

ment to this great composer. Whether the style of the overture was new to Corelli, or whether he attempted to modify it according to his taste and fancy, does not appear*; but Handel, giving way to his natural impetuosity of temper, snatched the violin from his hand. Corelli, with that gentleness which always marked his character, simply replied :—"Mio caro Sassone, questa musica è nello stile Francese, di che io non m'intendo." —"My dear Saxon, this music is in the French style, with which I am not acquainted."

The biography of Corelli has received the accession of several interesting anecdotes, through one of his most illustrious pupils, Geminiani, who was himself an eye and an ear witness of the matters he has related. These may find a fitting place here.

At the time when Corelli was at the zenith of his reputation, a royal invitation reached him from the Court of Naples, where a great curiosity prevailed to hear his performance. The unobtrusive *Maestro*, not a little loth, was at length induced to accept the invitation; but, lest he should not be well accompanied, he took with him his own second violin and violoncello players. At Naples he found Alessandro Scarlatti and several other masters†, who entreated him to play some of his concertos before the king. This he, for a while, declined, on account of his whole band not being with him; and there was no time, he said, for a rehearsal. At length,

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* The overture is inserted in the printed collections of Handel's Overtures; and it is conjectured that it was the *first* movement which appeared so difficult to Corelli.

† This must have happened about the year 1708; as it appears that Scarlatti was settled at Rome from 1709 to the time of his decease. Corelli's Concertos therefore must have been composed many years before they were published.

however, he consented, and, in great fear, performed the first of them. His astonishment was very great to find that the Neapolitan band executed his concertos almost as accurately at sight as his own band after repeated rehearsals, and when they had almost got them by heart. "*Si suona* (said he to Matteo, his second violin) *a Napoli!*"—"They *play*, at Naples!"

After this, he being again admitted into his Majesty's presence, and desired to perform one of his sonatas, the king found the adagio so long and dry, that, being tired of it, he *quitted the room*, to the great mortification of Corelli. Afterwards, he was desired to lead, in the performance of a masque composed by Scarlatti, which was to be executed before the king. This he undertook, but, owing to Scarlatti's very limited acquaintance with the violin, Corelli's part was somewhat awkward and difficult; in one place it went up to F, and when they came to that passage, Corelli failed, and could not execute it; but he was astonished, beyond measure, to hear Petrillo, the Neopolitan leader, and the other violins, perform with ease that which had baffled his utmost skill. A song succeeded this, in C minor, which Corelli led off in C major. "*Ricomminciamo*" (let us begin again), said Scarlatti, good-naturedly. Still, Corelli persisted in the major key, till Scarlatti was obliged to call out to him, and set him right. So mortified was poor Corelli with this disgrace, and the deplorable figure which he imagined he had made at Naples, that he stole back to Rome, in silence. Soon after this, a hautboy-player (whose name Geminiani could not recollect) acquired such applause at Rome, that Corelli, disgusted, would never again play in public. All these mortifications, superadded to the success of Valentini, whose Concertos and performance, though infinitely inferior to those of

Corelli, were become fashionable, threw him into such a state of melancholy and chagrin, as was thought to have hastened his death.

The account thus furnished by Geminiani, of Corelli's journey to Naples, is something beyond mere personal anecdote; for, as Dr. Burney fitly observes, it throws light upon the comparative state of music at Naples and at Rome in Corelli's time, and exhibits a curious contrast, between the fiery genius of the Neapolitans, and the meek, timid and gentle character of Corelli, so analogous to the style of his music. To this reflection it might have been added, that the latter part of the narrative forms a painful contribution to the catalogue of instances in which public caprice has done the work of ingratitude, and consigned the man of genius to a neglect which his sensitive nature must render the worst of cruelties.

In 1712, the *Concertos* of Corelli were beautifully engraved, at Amsterdam, by Etienne Roger, and Michael Charles La Cène, and dedicated to John William, Prince Palatine of the Rhine. The author survived the publication of this admirable work but six weeks; the Dedication bearing date at Rome, the 3rd of December, 1712, and he dying on the 18th of January, 1713.

Corelli was interred in the church of the Rotunda, otherwise called the Pantheon, in the first chapel on the left hand of the entrance of that beautiful temple. Over the place of his interment, there is a sepulchral monument with a marble bust, erected to his memory, at the expense of Philip William, Count Palatine of the Rhine, under the direction of Cardinal Ottoboni. The monument bears an inscription in tributary Latin, and the bust represents him with a music-paper in his hand, on which are engraved a few bars of that celebrated air, the *Giga*, in his 5th Sonata. It is worthy of remark, that

this monument is contiguous to that of the greatest of painters, Raffaelle*.

During many years after Corelli's decease, a solemn service, consisting of selections from his own works, was performed in the Pantheon by a numerous band, on the anniversary of his funeral. This custom was not discontinued, until there were no longer any of his immediate scholars surviving to conduct the performance. Sir John Hawkins and Dr. Burney, who have both cited testimony as to this practice, concur in representing, that the works of the great master used to be performed, on this occasion, in a slow, firm and distinct manner, just as they were written, without changing the passages in the way of embellishment: and this, it is probable, was the manner in which he himself was wont to play them.

Of the private life and moral character of this celebrated musician, no new information is now likely to be obtained; but the most favorable impression on this head is derived from analogy, in addition to what we possess of fact. If we may judge of his natural disposition and equanimity by the mildness, sweetness and even tenor of his musical ideas, the conclusion must be that his temper and his talents had pretty equal share in the office of endearing him to all his acquaintance. It appears, moreover, that his facile habit did not always

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* The coincidences suggested by this juxta-position are so inviting for an epigrammatic twist, that the indulgent reader will, perhaps, pardon the following attempt:

Each heading, in his art, the school of Rome,
Painter and Fiddler here have found their tomb.
Though dead in body, both in fame are quick—
Fame wrought with *hair* appended to a *stick*!
So Genius triumphs, and her sway extends,
By means minute attaining greatest ends.

render him insensible of that respect which was due to his character as well as to his skill. It is said that, when he was once playing a solo at Cardinal Ottoboni's house, he observed the Cardinal and another person in discourse, on which he laid down his instrument; and, being asked the reason, answered that he "feared the music interrupted the conversation"—a reply in which modesty and dignity were nicely blended. He is related, also, to have been a man of humour and pleasantry. Some who were acquainted with him have censured him for parsimonious habits, but on no better ground than his accustomed plainness of dress, and his disinclination to the use of a carriage.

His taste, which was not limited to the circle of his own art, evinced itself enthusiastically in favor of pictures; and he lived in habits of intimacy with Carlo Cignani and Carlo Maratti. It seems that he had accumulated a sum equal to £6000. The account that is given of his having bequeathed the whole of this amount, besides a valuable collection of pictures, to his patron, Cardinal Ottoboni, has been observed to savour more of vanity than of true generosity; and, indeed, the Cardinal evinced the most considerate appreciation of the bequest, by reserving only the pictures, and distributing the remainder of Corelli's effects among his indigent relations.

In regard to the peculiar merits of Corelli's productions, it may be briefly said, that his Solos (or *Opera Quinta*), as a classical book for forming the hand of a young practitioner on the violin, has ever been regarded, by the most eminent masters of the instrument, as a truly valuable work; and it is said, of this elaborate work (on which all good systems for the instrument have since been founded), that it cost him three years

to revise and correct it. Indeed, all his compositions are said to have been written with great deliberation, to have been corrected by him at many different times, and to have been submitted to the inspection of the most skilful musicians of his day. Of his Solos, the second, third, fifth, and sixth are admirable; as are the ninth, tenth, and, for the elegant sweetness of its second movement, the eleventh. The ninth is probably the most perfect, as a whole; and the Solos, generally, seem to have been drawn from the author's native resources, more extensively than any of his other productions. The most emphatic evidence of the value of these Solos lies in the fact of their adoption by the highest instructors. Tartini formed all his scholars on them; and it was the declaration of Giardini, that, of any two pupils of equal age and abilities, if the one were to begin his studies by Corelli, and the other by Geminiani, or any other eminent master whatever, the first would become the better performer. Let it be observed, however, that it is not from Corelli, that the niceties and dexterities of *bowing*, which characterize the modern state of the art, are derived. The qualities he is capable of imparting are tone and time: or, in other words, he teaches the full extraction of sound, and the utmost steadiness of hand.

The *Concertos* of Corelli (the sixth and last of his works) appear to have withstood the attacks of time and fashion with more firmness than any of his other productions. The harmony is so pure; the parts are so clearly, judiciously, and ingeniously disposed; and the effect of the whole, from a large band, is so majestic, solemn and sublime, that they nearly preclude all criticism, and make us forget that there is any other music of the same kind existing. They are still performed,

now and then, at the Philharmonic Concerts. Though composed at a time when the faculties of the author might be supposed to have been on the decline, they exhibit the strongest proof of the contrary. To speak more definitely of their merits, nothing can exceed, in dignity and majesty, the opening of the First Concerto, nor, for its plaintive sweetness, the whole of the Third; and that person must have no feeling of the power of harmony, or the effects of modulation, who can listen to the Eighth without rapture.

The following further comments on them are from the pen of a sensible anonymous writer in a periodical work:—"Though they are no longer calculated to show off the bow and fingers of the principal violin-player, yet their effect, as symphonies for a numerous orchestra, is excellent, and never fails to delight the audience. Their melody is flowing and simple, and of a kind which is independent of the changes of fashion: the harmony is pure and rich, and the disposition of the parts judicious and skilful. The Eighth of these Concertos, composed for the purpose of being performed on Christmas Eve, has probably had more celebrity than any piece of music that ever was written. It is exquisitely beautiful, and seems destined to bid defiance to the attacks of time. The whole is full of profound religious feeling; and the pastoral sweetness of the movement descriptive of the 'Shepherds abiding in the fields,' has never been surpassed—not even by Handel's movement of the same kind in the 'Messiah.' If ever this music is thrown aside and forgotten, it will be the most unequivocal sign of the corruption of taste, and the decay of music, in England."

The compositions of Corelli, taken altogether, are celebrated for the harmony resulting from the union of

all the parts; but the fineness of the airs is another distinguishing characteristic of them. The Allemande, in the Tenth Solo, is as remarkable for spirit and force, as that in the Eleventh is for its charming delicacy. His *jigs* are in a style peculiarly his own; and that in the Fifth Solo was, perhaps, never equalled. In the gavot movements, in the Second and Fourth Operas, the melody is distributed, with great judgment, among the several parts. In his Minuets alone, he seems to fail; Bononcini, Handel, Haydn, Martini and others, have excelled him in this kind of air.

The music of Corelli is, generally speaking, the language of nature. It is equally intelligible to the learned and to the unlearned. Amidst the numerous innovations which the love of change had introduced, it still continued to be performed, and was heard with delight in churches, in theatres, and at public solemnities and festivals, in all the cities of Europe, for nearly forty years. Persons remembered and would refer to passages of it, as to a classic author; and, even at this day, the masters of the science do not hesitate to pronounce, of the compositions of Corelli, that, for correct harmony, and for elegant modulation, they are scarcely to be exceeded. Yet there is one deficiency, that should not be passed over in a review of the compositions of this master: and it is one that may suggest itself from what has been already said of him. They want that stirring quality of passion, which ministers so importantly to the life of a production, whether in the world of music, of poetry, or of painting. They lose, through this omission, nearly all the benefits of the principle of contrast, on which effect, in so material a degree, depends. Their beauties, wanting this relief, are scarcely able, sometimes, to escape the charge of insipidity. The

absence of intensity in the works of Corelli, seems to be partly a consequence of the natural character of the man: but it is doubtless also partly owing to the state of musical taste at that period. There was little or no melody in instrumental music before his time; and although, considering how much slow and solemn movements abound in his works, they display but a slender portion of the true pathetic, yet has he considerably more grace and elegance in his *Cantilena*, more vocality of expression, than his predecessors. Indeed, when we recollect that some of his productions are more than a hundred and fifty years old, we must regard, with some admiration and astonishment, the healthy longevity of his fame, which can only be accounted for on the principle of the ease and simplicity that belong characteristically to his works.

The following summary of the character of Corelli's music has been given by Geminiani. Dr. Burney's remark, that it seems very just, may be very fairly assented to.—"His merit was not depth of learning, like that of his contemporary, Alessandro Scarlatti; nor great fancy, nor a rich *invention* in melody or harmony; but a nice ear, and most delicate taste, which led him to select the most *pleasing* melodies and harmonies, and to construct the parts so as to produce the most delightful effect upon the ear."

An extensive and rapidly diffused impression in favor of the Violin, and the larger homogeneous instruments, was produced in Europe by the publication of the works of Corelli, who indeed must be considered as the author of the greatest improvements which music, simply instrumental, underwent at the commencement of the 18th century. As a consequence of the impulse thus communicated, there was scarcely a town in Italy, about that

period, where some distinguished performer on the violin did not reside. Dr. Burney enumerates about a dozen of these, in one paragraph; but the apparent similarity of their merits, which does not encourage any circumstantial commemoration, may serve to bring to the mind of the classical reader the "fortemque Gyan fortemque Cloanthum" of Virgil. One of these locally great individuals, Nicola Cosimo, who came to England about 1702, has derived some little accession of fame, from the fact of his portrait having been painted by Kneller, and *coppered* by Smith. It is probable, that he is now more known to print-collectors than to musicians, although his *Twelve Solos*, published in this country, possess considerable merit, for the time—a merit not free, however, from pretty large obligations to Corelli.

Don Antonio Vivaldi, Chapel-master of the *Conservatorio della Pietà*, at Venice, seems to have enjoyed, in his day, a popularity of the most animated and unhesitating kind, both as composer and performer. Besides a number of dramatic compositions, in the form of Opera, he published eleven instrumental works, exclusively of his pieces called *Stravaganze*, which, among flashy players, whose chief merit was the novelty of rapid execution, occupied the highest place of favor. To be loud and brisk, appears to have been the chief ambition of this exhibitor; no bad method of ensuring a predominance of applause in all "mixed company." His *Cuckoo Concerto* was once the wonder and delight of all frequenters of English country concerts; and Woodcock, one of the Hereford *Waits*, was sent for, far and near, to perform it. If Vivaldi's musical fame were to rest on this production, it would figure but poorly; for the thing, though reprinted in London a few years ago, is indeed, when put to the test, "full of sound and

fury, signifying nothing." It is just of the order of stuff that might serve to agitate the orchestral elbows in a pantomime. Doubtless, it found a fitting exponent in "Mr. Woodcock, of the Hereford Waits:" Vivaldi's *own* playing must have been too good for it. Of the pieces styled his *Solos*, it has been critically remarked, that they are extremely tame and vapid, while the characteristic of his *Concertos* is a singular wildness and irregularity, in which he oftentimes transgresses the bounds both of melody and modulation. Though, in some of his compositions, the harmony and the artful contexture of the parts are their least merit, there is one (the eleventh of his first twelve concertos) which is esteemed a solid and masterly composition, and is an evidence that the writer possessed a greater portion of skill and learning than his works in general discover. To account for the singularity of Vivaldi's style, it should be observed that he had been witness to the dull *imitations* of Corelli that prevailed among the masters of his time; and that, for the sake of variety, he unfortunately adopted a style which had little but novelty to recommend it, and could serve for little else but "to please the itching vein of idle-headed fashionists."

The title of Don, prefixed to Vivaldi's name, was derived from the *clerical* character which belonged to him; and he must, indisputably, have been one of the most lively of priests. Mr. Wright, in his "Travels through Italy, from 1720 to 1722," has a passage indicative of this union of the clerical and musical functions: —"It is very usual to see priests play in the orchestra. The famous Vivaldi, whom they call the *Prete Rosso*, very well known among us for his concertos, was a topping man among them at Venice."

Vivaldi, together with Albinoni, Alberti, and Tessa-

rini, is to be classed among the light and irregular troops. For the more disciplined and efficient forces, we must look to the Roman school, formed by Corelli, in which were produced the greatest composers and performers for the violin that Italy could boast, during the first half of the 18th century.

Francesco Geminiani, the ablest of Corelli's scholars, and who forms one of the brightest parts in the chain of Violinists

"In linked sweetness long drawn out,"

was born at Lucca, about the year 1680*. His first instructions in music were derived from Alessandro Scarlatti; and his study of the violin was commenced under Lunati (surnamed Il Gobbo), and completed under the great archetype, Corelli.

On leaving Rome, where Corelli was then flourishing, Geminiani went to Naples, preceded by a degree of fame which secured his most favorable reception, and placed him at the head of the orchestra. If, however, we are to credit Barbella, the impetuosity of his feelings, and the fire of his genius, too ardent for his judgment, rendered him, at this period, so vague and unsteady a *timeist*, that, instead of guiding, combining, and giving concinnity to the performers under his direction, he disordered their motions, embarrassed their execution, and, in a word, threw the whole band into confusion.

In the year 1714, he came to England, where his exquisite powers, as a solo performer, commanded universal admiration, and excited, among the nobility and gentry, a contention for the honor of patronising such

* Dr. Burney dates his birth 1666; but Sir John Hawkins, who assigns the date above given, is the more likely to be correct, as he was personally acquainted with Geminiani.

rare abilities. The German Baron, Kilmansegge, was then chamberlain to George the First, as Elector of Hanover, and a great favorite of the King. To that nobleman Geminiani particularly attached himself, and, accordingly, dedicated to him his first work—a set of Twelve Sonatas, published in 1716. The style of these pieces was peculiarly elegant; but many of the passages were so florid, elaborate and difficult of execution, that few persons were adequate to their performance; yet all allowed their extraordinary merit, and many pronounced them superior to those of Corelli. They had, indeed, such an effect, that it became a point of eager debate, whether skill in execution, or taste in composition, constituted the predominant excellence of Geminiani; and so high was the esteem he enjoyed, among the lovers of instrumental music, that it is difficult to say, had he duly regarded his interest, to what extent he might not have availed himself of public and private favor. Kilmansegge, anxious to procure him a more effective patronage than his own, represented his merits to the notice of the King, who, looking over his works, became desirous to hear some of the pieces performed by their author; and soon after, accompanied, at his own earnest request, by Handel on the harpsichord, Geminiani so acquitted himself, as at once to delight his royal auditor, and to give new confirmation of the superiority of the violin over all other stringed instruments.

In 1726, he arranged Corelli's first six *Solos*, as *Concertos;* and, soon after, the last six, but with a success by no means equal to that which attended the first. He also similarly treated six of the same composer's *Sonatas*, and, in some additional *parts*, imitated their style with an exactitude that at once manifested his flexible ingenuity, and his judicious reverence for his originals.

Encouraged, however, as he might be considered, by the success of this undertaking, to proceed in the exercise of his powers, six years elapsed before another work appeared—when he produced his own first set of *Concertos;* these were soon followed by a second set; and the merits of these two productions established his character as an eminent master in that species of composition. The opening Concerto in the first of these two sets is distinguished for the charming minuet with which it closes; and the last Concerto in the second set is esteemed one of the finest compositions known of its kind.

His second set of Solos (admired more than practised, and practised more than performed) was printed in 1739: and his third set of Concertos (laboured, difficult and fantastic), in the year 1741. Soon after this, he published his long-promised, and once impatiently-expected work, entitled "*Lo Dizionario Armonico.*" In this work, after giving due commendation to Lully, Corelli and Bononcini, as having been the first improvers of instrumental music, he endeavours to refute the idea, that the vast foundations of universal harmony can be established upon the narrow and confined modulation of these authors; and makes many remarks on the uniformity of modulation apparent in the compositions that had appeared in different parts of Europe for several years previously.

This didactic production possessed many recommendatory qualities; many combinations, modulations and cadences, calculated to create, and to advance the science and taste of a *tyro;* but it appeared too late. Indolence had suffered the influence of his name to diminish, and his style and ideas (new as, in some respects, they were) to be superseded by the more fashionable manner, and more novel conceptions, of fresh candidates for favour and fame.

This work was succeeded by his "*Treatise on Good Taste,*" and his "*Rules for playing in Good Taste;*" and, in 1748, he brought forward his "*Art of Playing on the Violin;*" at that time a highly useful work, and superior to any similar publication extant. It contained the most minute directions for holding the instrument, and for the use of the bow; as well as the graces, the various shifts of the hand, and a great number of applicable examples.

About 1756, Geminiani was struck with a most curious and fantastic idea; that of a piece, the performance of which should represent to the imagination all the events in the episode of the thirteenth book of Tasso's Jerusalem. It is needless to say, that the chimera was too extravagant, of attempting to narrate and instruct, describe and inform, by the vague medium of instrumental sounds. Musical sounds may possibly, according to a conjecture sometimes entertained, constitute the language of heaven; but as we, on earth, are possessed of no *key* to their meaning in that capacity, we must be content to employ, for our purposes of intercommunion, the *articulate*, which alone is, to us, the *definite*.

In 1750, Geminiani went to Paris, where he continued about five years; after which, he returned to England, and published a new edition of his first two sets of Concertos. In 1761, he visited Ireland, in order to spend some time with his favourite and much-attached scholar, Dubourg, master of the King's band in Dublin. Geminiani had spent many years in compiling an elaborate Treatise on Music, which he designed for publication; but, soon after his arrival in Dublin, by the treachery of a female servant (who, it has been said, was recommended to him for no other purpose than that

she might steal it), the manuscript was purloined out of his chamber, and could never afterwards be recovered. The magnitude of this loss, and his inability to repair it, made a deep impression on his mind, and seemed to hasten fast his dissolution. He died at Dublin on the 17th of September, 1762, in the eighty-third year of his age.*

Endowed with feeling, a respectable master of the laws of harmony, and acquainted with *some* of the secrets of fine composition, Geminiani can hardly be said to have been unqualified either to move the soul, or to gratify the sense: yet truth, after being just to his real deserts, will affirm that his bass is not uniformly the most select; that his melody is frequently irregular in its phrase and measure; and that, on the whole, he is decidedly inferior to Corelli, with whom, by his admirers, he has been too frequently and too fondly compared.

For what was deficient in his compositions, as well as for what was unfavourable in his fortune, the unsettled habits of his life, and his inherent inclination for rambling, may perhaps partly account. His fondness for pictures (a taste very strongly developed in him) was less discreetly exercised than it had been by his prototype, Corelli. On the contrary, to gratify this propensity, he not only suspended his studies, and neglected his profession, but oftentimes involved himself in pecuniary embarrassments, which a little prudence and foresight would have enabled him to avoid. To gratify his taste, he bought pictures; and, to supply his wants,

* According to Dr. Burney's reckoning, his term of years would have been 96: the reason for supposing that authority erroneous has been already stated.

he sold them. The consequence of this kind of traffic was loss, and its concomitant, necessity. Under such circumstances, the concentration of thought, requisite for giving to his productions the utmost value derivable from the natural powers of his mind, was almost impossible.

A trait creditable to his character, on a graver score, presents itself in the following transaction. The place of Master and Composer of the state-music in Ireland became vacant in the year 1727, and the Earl of Essex obtained from Sir Robert Walpole, the minister, a promise of it. He then told Geminiani that his difficulties were at an end, as he had provided for him a place suited to his profession, which would afford him an ample provision for life. On enquiry into the conditions of the office, Geminiani found that it was not tenable by a member of the Romish communion. He therefore declined accepting, assigning this as a reason, and at the same time observing that, although he had never made any great pretensions to religion, yet to renounce that faith in which he had been first baptized, for the *sake* of temporal advantages, was what he could in no way answer for to his conscience. The post was given to Matthew Dubourg, who had formerly been the pupil of Geminiani, and whose merits were not excluded by similar grounds for rejection.

Lorenzo Somis, chapel-master to the King of Sardinia, was recorded in Italy as an imitator of Corelli, but in a style somewhat modernized, after the model of Vivaldi.

He printed, at Rome, in 1722, his "*Opera Prima di Sonate à Violino e Violoncello, ó Cembalo,*" the pieces contained in which are much in Corelli's manner; some of them with double-stopped fugues, like those of his

model, and some without. Somis was one of the greatest masters of the violin of his time; but his chief professional honour,—"the pith and marrow of his attribute,"—is the having formed, among his scholars, such a performer as Giardini.

Stefano Carbonelli, who had studied the violin under Corelli, was one of the Italian Artists who contributed to diffuse the celebrity of the instrument in this country. About the year 1720, he was induced by the Duke of Rutland to come to England, and was received into the house of that nobleman. During his residence there, he published *Twelve Solos for a Violin and Bass*, which he frequently played in public with great applause. In each of the first six of these, there is a double-stopped fugue; and the rest, it has been observed, have pleasing melodies, with correct and judicious counterpoint. In the progress of his success in England, Carbonelli was placed at the head of the opera band, and soon became celebrated for his excellent performance.

About the year 1725, he quitted the opera orchestra for an employment in Drury Lane Theatre, where he also led, and frequently played select concert pieces between the acts. After continuing there some time, he engaged himself with Handel, as a performer in his oratorios. For several years, he played at the rehearsal and performance at St. Paul's, for the benefit of the Sons of the Clergy.

In the latter part of his life, he in a great measure neglected the profession of music, having become a merchant, and an importer of wine from France and Germany. He obtained the place of one of the purveyors of wine to the King; and died in that employment in the year 1772.

At the time of Carbonelli's relaxing in his homage to Apollo, for the sake of becoming a minister of Bacchus, the following lines (which have been admirably set, for two voices, by Dr. Cooke) were made up for the occasion :—

Let Rubinelli charm the ear,
And sing, as erst, with voice divine,—
To Carbonelli I adhere;
Instead of music, give *me* wine!
But yet, perhaps, with wine combin'd,
Soft music may our joys improve;
Let both together, then, be join'd,
And feast we like the gods above! *

Pietro Locatelli, another of Corelli's pupils, but one who made the boldest innovations upon the manner of that great master, and deviated, exploringly, into remarkable paths of his own, was born at Bergamo, about 1693. Being still a youth, at the time of Corelli's decease, and full of ardent impulses in relation to the art he had embraced, Locatelli gave way to these, and soon became conspicuous for a boldness and originality which, even in our own days, would not pass unacknowledged. He developed new combinations, and made free use of arpeggios and harmonic sounds. The compositions of this master, as well as those of Mestrino, who flourished somewhat later, and was the more graceful of the two in his style of playing, are supposed to have furnished hints of no small profit to the penetrating genius of Paganini.

* It is a somewhat curious circumstance that the descendant of Carbonelli, with an *i* less than his progenitor, is at this day exercising that very liquid calling which finally prevailed with the man of music. Whether, besides selling superlative wine, he makes any pretension to support the ancestral honors on the violin, is a point I am unable to determine.

Locatelli died in Holland, in 1764. The crabbed passages in which he delighted to display his force, are to be found in his work entitled "Arte di nuova Modulazione," or, as it is termed in the French editions, "Caprices Énigmatiques."

We now approach one of those names on which the biographer may fairly delight to dwell, for its association not only with the great and beautiful in art, but with the interesting in personal character, and the romantic in incident.

Giuseppe Tartini, of Padua, the last great improver (save Viotti) of the practice of the violin, was born in April, 1692, at Pirano, a sea-port town in Istria. His father had been ennobled, in recompense of certain substantial benefactions, exercised towards the Cathedral Church at Parenza. Giuseppe was originally intended for the law; but, mixing the more seductive study of music with the other objects of his education, it soon gained the ascendant over the whole circle of the sister sciences. This is not so surprising as another strong propensity, which, during his youth, much fascinated him. This was the love of fencing—an art not likely to become necessary to the safety or honor of one possessed of the pious and pacific disposition that belonged to him, and one engaged, too, in a civil employment: yet he is said, even in this art, to have equalled the master from whom he received instructions. In 1710, he was sent to the University of Padua, to pursue his studies as a civilian; but, before he was twenty, having committed the sin of sacrificing prudence to love, in a match which he entered into without the parental *fiat*, he was forsaken, in return, and reduced to wander about in search of an asylum. This, after many hardships, he found in a convent at Assisi, where he was received by a monk, his relative,

who, commiserating his misfortunes, let him remain there till something better might be done for him. While thus secluded and sorrowful, he took up the violin, to "manage it against despairing thoughts"—an expedient which the devotion of his soul to music must have lent some efficacy to. Not only his solace, but, by a singular turn of fortune, his rescue also, was connected with his violin. On a certain great festival, when he was in the orchestra of the convent, he was discovered, through the accident of a remarkably high wind, which, forcing open the doors of the church, blew aside the orchestral curtain, and exposed all the performers to the sight of the congregation. His recognition, under these circumstances, by a Paduan acquaintance, led to the accommodation of differences; and he then settled with his wife, for some time, at Venice*. This lady proved to be of that particular race which has never been wholly extinct since the time of Xantippe; but as, fortunately, poor Tartini was more than commonly Socratic in wisdom, virtue and patience, her reign was unmolested by any domestic war, or useless opposition to her supremacy.

His residence at Venice was rendered memorable to him, by the arrival of the celebrated Veracini (the

* There is another account of this love episode in Tartini's life, which does not conduct it so far as matrimony, but represents that, when all the arguments of his friends against the match were found to be without effect, his father was compelled to confine him to his room; and that, in order to engage his attention, he furnished him with books and musical instruments, by means of which he *soon overcame his passion!* This statement, so opposed to the general experience of such matters, will easily be discredited by all youthful hearts. Cure a young gentleman's passion, his first love, by locking him up in a study! Preposterous. Let us cling to the more current account, and confide in probability and Dr. Burney.

younger) in that city. The performance of this "homme marquant" awakened a vivid emulation in Tartini, who, though he was acknowledged to have a powerful hand, had never heard a great player before, nor conceived it possible for the *bow* to possess such varied capabilities for energy and expression. Under this feeling, he quitted Venice with prompt decision, and proceeded to Ancona, in order to study the use of the bow in greater tranquillity and with more convenience than at Venice, as he had a place assigned him in the operatic orchestra of that city. In the same year (1714), his studious application enabled him to make a discovery—that of the phenomenon of the *third sound*—which created a great sensation in the musical world, both in his own time and long afterwards, though it has led to no important practical results. This phenomenon of the third sound is the sympathetic resonance of a third note, when the two upper notes of a chord are sounded. Thus, if two parts are sung in thirds, a sensitive ear will feel the simultaneous impression of a bass or lower part. This effect may be more distinctly heard, if a series of consecutive thirds be played on the violin perfectly in tune. "If you do not hear the bass," said Tartini to his pupils, "the thirds or sixths which you are playing are not perfect in the intonation*." This mysterious sympathy, by which sound is enabled to call up a fellowship of sound, may be fancifully expressed in a line from the old poet, Drayton :—

"One echo makes another to rejoice!"

* Of several treatises which Tartini has written, the one most celebrated, his "Trattato di Musica, secondo la vera scienza dell' Armonia," is that in which he unfolds the nature of this discovery, and deduces many observations tending to explain the musical scale, and, in the opinion of some persons, to correct several of the intervals of which it is composed.

His diligence and exemplary devotion to his art, while at Ancona, led also to another prominent occurrence in his career—the appointment, in 1721, to the distinguished place of first violin, and master of the band, to the church of St. Anthony, of Padua. To St. Anthony, as his patron saint, he consecrated himself and his instrument, with a species and a constancy of attachment, that may find not only their excuse, but their credit, in the nature and sentiment of the times he lived in. His extending fame brought him repeated offers from Paris and London, to visit those capitals; but, holding to his conscientious allegiance, he uniformly declined entering into any other service, and was, like St. Anthony himself, a pattern of resistance to temptation.

By the year 1728, he had made many excellent scholars, and established a system of practice, for students on the violin, that was celebrated all over Europe, and increased in reputation to the end of his life. Great numbers of young men resorted to Padua from different countries, in order to receive instruction from him in music, but chiefly in the practice of the violin.

In the early part of his life, he published "*Sonate a Violino e Violoncello, o Cembalo, Opera Prima.*" This, and his Opera Seconda, of *Six Sonatas* or *Solos* for the same instrument, and another work entitled "*XVIII Concerti a cinque Stromenti,*" were all published by Le Cène, of Amsterdam, and prove him to have been a truly excellent composer. Such, however, was the ascendancy of Corelli's name, and so ambitious was Tartini of being thought a follower of the precepts and principles of that master, that, during the zenith of his own reputation, he refused to teach any other music to his pupils, till they had studied the *Opera Quinta,*

or *Solos*, of Corelli; and the excellence of this foundation was made manifest by the result. His favorite pupils were Bini and Nardini. These, as well as others of Tartini's *élèves*, formed, in their turn, scholars of great abilities, who contributed to spread his reputation and manner of playing all over Europe.

Tartini's own first master was an obscure musician, of the name of Giulio di Terni, who afterwards made a fitting change of position, and descended into the pupil of his own scholar—a circumstance related by Tartini himself, who used to say that he had studied very little till after he was thirty years of age*. At the age of fifty-two, Tartini made a marked alteration in his style of playing, from extreme difficulty (or what was *then* so considered) to grace and expression. His method of executing an adagio has been represented by his contemporaries as inimitable, and was almost, in their idea, supernatural—an impression to which the idea of the patron saint must have not a little conduced.

The particulars that have been preserved respecting his scholar, Pasquale Bini, are not without interest. Recommended to him at the age of fifteen, by Cardinal Olivieri, Tartini found him a youth after his own heart, possessing excellent moral dispositions, as well as musical; and he accordingly cherished a very marked regard for him. This young musician practised with such assiduity, that, in three or four years, he vanquished the most difficult of Tartini's compositions, and executed them with greater force than the author himself. When he had finished his studies, his patron, Cardinal Olivieri, took him to Rome, where he astonished all the Profes-

* For Tartini's judicious letter of elementary hints, addressed to Madame Sirmen, see the chapter on *Female Violinists*.

sors by his performance,—particularly Montagnari, at that time the principal violinist there; and it is generally believed, that Montagnari was so mortified by the superiority, as to have died of grief! When informed that Tartini had changed his style and taste in playing, Bini returned to Padua,

"Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum,"—

and placed himself for another year under that excellent and worthy master; at the end of which period, so intense had been his application, that he played with a degreee of certainty and expression truly wonderful.

On a certain occasion, in recommending a scholar to him, after his return to Rome, Tartini expressed his sense of Bini's powers and character, and gave evidence of his own modest and ingenuous disposition, in the following words:—"Io lo mando a un mio scolare chi suona più di me; e me ne glorio, per essere un angelo di costume, e religioso."—"I recommend him (the applicant) to a scholar of mine, who plays better than myself; and I am proud of it, as he is an angel in religion and morals." Such praise has its value enhanced by the source whence it proceeds; for it was truly "laudari a laudato viro."

The death of Tartini occurred at Padua, on the 26th of February, 1770, to the general regret of the people of that city, where he had resided nearly fifty years, and not only was regarded as its most attractive ornament, but, owing to the serious and contemplative turn of his mind, had attained the estimation of being a saint and a philosopher.

Of the general character of Tartini's compositions, Dr. Burney, who appears to have studied them closely, has given the following judgment:—"Though he made Corelli his model in the purity of his harmony and sim-

plicity of his modulation, he greatly surpassed that composer in the fertility and originality of his invention; not only in the subjects of his melodies, but in the truly *cantabile* manner of treating them. Many of his adagios want nothing but *words*, to be excellent pathetic opera-songs. His allegros are sometimes difficult; but the passages fairly belong to the instrument for which they were composed, and were suggested by his consummate knowledge of the finger-board, and the powers of the bow. As a harmonist, he was perhaps more truly scientific than any other composer of his time, in the clearness, character and precision of his bases, which were never casual, or the effect of habit or auricular prejudice and expectation, but learned, judicious and certain. And yet I must, in justice to others, own that, though the adagio and solo playing, in general, of his scholars are exquisitely polished and expressive, yet it seems as if that energy, fire, and freedom of bow, which modern symphonies and orchestra-playing require, were wanting."

The applicability of the latter remark is, of course, considerably greater in these days than in the Doctor's time. Another and more recent critical opinion is subjoined:—

"Tartini's compositions, with all the correctness and polish of Corelli's, are bolder and more impassioned. His slow movements, in particular, are remarkably vocal and expressive; and his music shows a knowledge of the violin, both in regard to the bow and the finger-board, which Corelli had not been able to attain. His works, therefore, though no longer heard in public, are still prized by the best musicians; a proof of which is, that some of them have been recently reprinted for the use of the *Conservatoire* of Paris. He has frequently

injured their effect, to modern ears, by the introduction of trills and other ornaments, which, like the flounces and furbelows of the female dress of his day, have become old-fashioned; but, at the same time, his compositions are full of beauties, which, belonging to the musical language of nature and feeling, are independent of the influence of time."

Few of my readers have failed, probably, to hear or read of "The Devil's Sonata," that forms so singular a "passage" in the experience of this remarkable man, and is to be met with in Records, Musical, Literary, and Pictorial. Monsieur De Lalande informs us that he had, from Tartini's own mouth, the following singular anecdote, which conveys an account of it, and shows to what a degree his imagination was inflamed by the genius of composition. "He dreamed, one night, in the year 1713, that he had made a compact with the Devil, who promised to be at his service on all occasions; and, during this vision, every thing succeeded according to his mind; his wishes were anticipated, and his desires always surpassed, by the assistance of his new servant. At length, he imagined that he presented to the Devil his violin, in order to discover what kind of a musician he was; when, to his great astonishment, he heard him play a *solo*, so singularly beautiful, and executed with such superior taste and precision, that it surpassed all the music he had ever heard or conceived in his life! So great was his surprise, and so exquisite his delight, upon this occasion, as to deprive him of the power of breathing. He awoke with the violence of his sensations, and instantly seized his instrument, in hopes of expressing what he had just heard; but in vain. He, however, then composed a piece, which is, perhaps, the best of all his works, and called it the *Devil's Sonata*; but it was so inferior to what his sleep had produced,

that he declared he would have broken his instrument, and abandoned music for ever, if he could have subsisted by any other means."

This remarkable legend, under its obvious associations with the fearful and the grotesque, is so inviting for poetic treatment, that I have ventured on the following attempt:—

TARTÍNI'S DREAM.

Grim-visag'd Satan on the Artist's bed
Sat—and a cloud of sounds mirific spread!
Wild flow'd those notes, as from enchantment's range,
"Wild, sweet, but incommunicably strange!"
Soft Luna, curious, as her sex beseems,
Shot through the casement her enquiring beams,
Which, entering, paler grew, yet half illum'd
The shade so deep that round the Arch-One gloomed:
And listening Night her pinions furled—for lo!
The Devil's Soul, O!* breathed beneath that bow!
Tranquil as death Tartini's form reclin'd,
And sealing sleep was strong his eyes to bind;
But the wild music of the nether spheres
Was in a key that did unlock his ears.
Squat, like a toad or tailor, sat the Fiend,
And forward, to his task, his body leaned.
His griffin fingers, with their horny ends,
Hammer the stops; the bow submissive bends:
His lengthy chin, descending, forms a vice
With his sharp collar-bone, contrariwise,
To grasp the conscious instrument, held on
With 'scapeless gripe;—and, ever and anon,
As flows the strain, now quaint, and now sublime,
He marks, with beatings of his tail, the time!
Snakes gird his head; but, in that music's bliss,
Enchanted, lose the discord of their hiss,
And twine in chords harmonic, though all mute,
As if they owned the sway of Orpheus' lute.
Satan hath joy—for round his lips awhile
Creeps a sharp-set, sulphuric-acid smile;

* Query, *Solo?*—PRINTER'S IMP.

And, at the mystic notes, successive sped,
Pleas'd, winketh he those eyes of flickering red,
And shakes the grizzly horrors of that head!
List! what a change! Soft wailings fill the air:
Plaintive and touching grows the demon-play'r.
Doth Satan mourn, with meltings all too late,
The sin and sorrow of his own sad state?

* * * * *

Night flies—the dream is past—and, pale and wan,
Starts from his spell-freed couch the anxious man.
Is it a marvel greater than his might,
Those winged sounds to summon back from flight?
To clutch them *whole*, in vain fond Hope inclin'd,
For Memory, overburthen'd, lagged behind.
Partly the strain fell 'neath Oblivion's pall,
But it had partly "an *un*-dying fall;"
And, in that state defective, to the light
Brought forth—it lives—a relic of that night!

The next name for notice, in connexion with the Italian School of the instrument, is that of

Francesco Maria Veracini (the younger), a great, but somewhat eccentric performer, who was born at Florence, at the close of the 17th century. Unlike his contemporary, Tartini, whose sensitive and modest disposition led him to court obscurity, Veracini was vain, ostentatious, and haughty. Various stories have been current in Italy about his arrogance and fantastic tricks, which obtained for him the designation of *Capo pazzo*. The following anecdote is sufficiently characteristic of him.

Being at Lucca at the time of the annual "Festa della Croce," on which occasion it was customary for the principal professors of Italy, vocal and instrumental, to meet, Veracini put down his name for a Solo Concerto. When he entered the choir, to take possession of the principal place, he found it already occupied by the

Padre Girolamo Laurenti*, of Bologna, who, not knowing him, as he had been some years absent, asked him whither he was going? "To the place of first violin," was the impetuous answer. Laurenti then explained that *he* had been always engaged to fill that post himself; but that if he wished to play a concerto, either at vespers or during high mass, he should have a place assigned to him. Veracini turned on his heel with contempt, and went to the lowest place in the orchestra. When he was called upon to play his concerto, he desired that the hoary old father would allow him, instead of it, to play a solo at the bottom of the choir, accompanied on the violoncello by Lanzetti. He played this in so brilliant and masterly a manner as to extort an *e viva!* in the public church; and, whenever he was about to make a close, he turned to Laurenti, and called out, *Così si suona per fare il primo violino*—"This is the way to play the first fiddle!"

Another characteristic story respecting this performer is the following:—

Pisendel, a native of Carlsburg, and one of the best violinists of the early part of the eighteenth century, piqued at the pride and hauteur of Veracini, who thought too highly of his own powers not to disdain a comparison of them with those of any performer then existing, determined, if possible, to mortify his conceit and self-consequence. For this purpose, while both were at Dresden, he composed a very difficult concerto, and engaged a *ripienist*, or inferior performer, to practise it till he had conceived the whole, and rendered the most intricate passages as familiar to his bow and finger as

* See the reference to the old sacerdotal habit of fiddling, at page 55.

the more obvious and easy parts of the composition. He then took occasion, the practitioner being present, to request Veracini to perform it. The great executant condescended to comply; but did not get through the task without calling into requisition all his powers. When he had concluded, the *ripienist*, agreeably to his previous instructions, stepped up to the desk, and began to perform the same piece; upon which Veracini, in a passion, tore him away, and would have punished on the spot his perilous presumption, had not Pisendel actively interfered, and persuaded him, were it only for the jest of the thing, to "let the vain creature expose himself." Veracini became pacified, the ripienist began again, and executed the whole even more perfectly than his precursor, who stamped on the floor with rage, swore he would never forgive Pisendel, and, scarcely less abashed than tormented, immediately quitted Dresden.

Veracini would give lessons to no one, except a nephew, who died young. The only master he himself had was his uncle, Antonio Veracini, of Florence; but, by travelling all over Europe, he formed a style of playing peculiar to himself. Besides being in the service of the King of Poland, he was for a considerable time at the various courts of Germany, and twice in England, where he composed several *operas*, and where Dr. Burney had the opportunity of witnessing and commenting on the bold and masterly character of his violin performance. Soon after his being here (about 1745), he was shipwrecked, and lost his two famous Steiner violins, reputed the best in the world, and all his effects. In his usual light style of discourse, he used to call one of these instruments St. Peter, and the other St. Paul.

As a composer, he had certainly a great share of whim and caprice; but he built his freaks on a good

foundation, being an excellent contrapuntist; and indeed it is probable enough that these very freaks, if tested by a contact with some of the fiddle *capriccios* and *pots-pourris* of our own day, would fall very much in the measure of extravagance, and leave us to wonder at what constituted a wonder in the more sober musical times of Burney and Hawkins. The peculiarities in his performance were his bow-hand, his shake, his learned arpeggios, and a tone so loud and clear that it could be distinctly heard through the most numerous band of a church or theatre*.

Pietro Nardini, a noted Tuscan Violinist, was born at Leghorn, in 1725. Instructed by Tartini, he soon became his most distinguished pupil;—nor as such only was he regarded by that great master, who, besides loving and admiring his rising genius, found in him a congeniality of character and sentiment, that served to establish a firm mutual friendship. In this instance, as in that of his other favourite pupil, Bini, we may remark the exemption of Tartini's mind from that sordid spot of jealousy, that too often dims the lustre of professional

* In his "Sonate Accademiche," *opera seconda*, published in London, 1744, we meet (observes Mr. G. F. Graham), on the page immediately preceding the music, with the first example we have noticed in *Sonate* of that time, of an explanation of marks of bowing and expression that occur in the course of the work. His marks for *crescendo-diminuendo*, and for *diminuendo*, and for *crescendo*, are of the same form as the modern ones—only *black* throughout.—His mark for an up-bow consists of a vertical line drawn from the interior of a semi-circle placed beneath it. His mark for a down-bow is the same figure reversed in position;—M^{r} for *mordente*, &c. These are things worth noticing in old music. In pages 67-9, of the same work, Veracini gives the Scottish air of Tweedside, with variations; the first instance we know, of Scottish music being so honored by an old Italian violinist.

talent. Attached, in 1763, to the Chapel of the Duke of Wirtemberg, Nardini soon evinced abilities that made him conspicuous. On the reduction or suppression of that establishment, a few years afterwards, he returned to Leghorn, where he composed almost all his works. In 1769, he went to Padua, to revisit Tartini, whom he attended in his last illness, with attachment truly filial. On his return to Leghorn, the generous offers of the Grand Duke of Tuscany determined him to quit that city, and enter the Duke's service. Joseph the Second, when he visited Italy, was greatly struck with the execution of this distinguished virtuoso, and made a curious gold snuff-box the memorial of his admiration. In 1783, the president, Dupaty, being in Italy, listened to him with a rapture which occasioned his exclaiming, "His violin is a voice, or possesses one. It has made the fibres of my ear to tremulate as they never did before. To what a degree of tenuity Nardini divides the air! How exquisitely he touches the strings of his instrument! With what art he modulates and purifies their tones!"

Michael Kelly makes reference to this distinguished artist, in speaking of a private concert at Florence. "There," observes he, "I had the gratification of hearing a sonata on the violin played by the great Nardini. Though very far advanced in years, he played divinely. He spoke with great affection of his favourite scholar, Thomas Linley, who, he said, possessed powerful abilities."—Kelly adds, that Nardini, when appealed to on that occasion, as to the truth of the anecdote about Tartini and the Devil's Sonata, gave distinct confirmation of it, as a thing he had frequently heard the relation of from Tartini himself.

Like some other masters of the old school, Nardini exhibited his powers to most advantage in the perform-

ance of *adagios;* and a high tribute to his capacity for expression is conveyed in what has been recorded of the magic of his bow—that it elicited sounds, which, when the performer was concealed from view, appeared rather those of the human voice than of a violin. Of his Sonatas, now almost consigned to oblivion, the style is ably sustained, the ideas are clear, the motive well treated, and the expression natural, though of a serious cast, as was the character of the composer.

Nardini died at Florence, in 1796, or, according to others, in 1793. Among the compositions of this pupil of Tartini, are to be reckoned six concertos for the violin; six solos for the same instrument (opera seconda); six trios for the flute; six other solos for the violin; six quartetts, six duetts; and, in manuscript, many concertos for the same instrument.

Luigi Boccherini, a composer of distinguished talents, to whom, and to Corelli, stands assigned the honour of being considered the fathers of *chamber-music* for stringed instruments, was a native of Lucca, and born in the year 1740. His first lessons in music and on the violoncello were imparted by the Abbate Vanucci. His disposition for music was early and strong; and his father, himself an ingenious musician, after attending with care to the cultivation of his son's talent, sent him to Rome, where he soon acquired a high reputation for the originality and variety of his productions. Returning, a few years afterwards, to Lucca, he gave there the first public performance of his Sonatas. It chanced that another Lucchese, Manfredi, a pupil of Nardini's, was also present at the time of Boccherini's return from Rome; and they executed together, with great public success, the Sonatas of the latter for violin and violoncello—his seventh work. The two professors, becoming

further associated in friendship, as well as in the musical art, quitted Italy together for Spain, where they met with such encouragement as determined Boccherini to establish himself in that country. Basking in the sunshine of royal favour, the only condition required of Boccherini for the continuance of its rays, was that he should work enough to produce, annually, nine pieces of his composition, for the use of the Royal Academy at Madrid; and he adhered faithfully to the engagement. He appears to have passed through life smoothly, as well as with honour. His death occurred at Madrid, in 1806, at the age of 66.

The compositions of this master, which have been of marked importance in connection with the progress of stringed instruments, are characterized by a noble sweetness, a genuine pathos, deep science and great nicety of art. It belongs to him, as a distinction, to have first fixed (about 1768) the character of three several classes of instrumental composition—the *trio*, the *quartett*, and the *quintett*. In the trio, he was followed by Fiorillo, Cramer, Giardini, Pugnani, and Viotti; and in the quartett, by Giardini, Cambini, Pugnani, and, in another style, by Pleyel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; while, in his quintetts for *two* violoncellos, he may be said to have no successor but Onslow. His productions of this last species, of which he has left no fewer than ninety-three—for he was little inferior to Haydn in fecundity of genius—are particularly deserving of study; and it was the remark of Dr. Burney, that he had supplied the performers on bowed instruments, and the lovers of music in general, with more excellent compositions than any other master belonging to that time, except Haydn. His manner, as the same writer adds, "is at once bold, masterly and elegant; and there

are movements in his works of every style, and in the true genius of the instruments for which he wrote, that place him high in rank among the greatest masters who have ever written for the violin or violoncello."

"As in the symphonies of Haydn," says a writer in the *Harmonicon*, "so in the quintetts of Boccherini, we observe the genuine stamp of genius, differing in the manner, but alike in the essence. Boccherini had studied, profoundly and thoroughly, the nature and capabilities of the *violoncello*. He composed nearly the whole of his music for this instrument, and was the first who wrote quintetts for two violoncellos. Striving to impart to these productions the sweet, pathetic, and, if the expression may be allowed, the religious character which distinguished most of his works, he conceived the idea of giving the *leading* part to the *violoncello*, and of throwing the harmony into the violin, alto and bass; the second violoncello, in the mean time, sometimes accompanying the first, and occasionally playing the air in concert with it."

The beautiful style of his quintetts, and the exquisite manner in which, in some of them, he has thus combined the two violoncellos, constrained an impassioned amateur to compare them to the music of the angels. Boccherini's first work was published at Paris, where it excited the highest admiration: his *Stabat Mater* is worthy of being placed by the side of that of Pergolèsi, of Durante, or of Haydn; and to his genius for composition he added so much executive skill on the violin, violoncello and pianoforte, that a musical enthusiast said (with a rapture probably too honest to be regarded as altogether profane), "If God chose to speak to man, he would employ the music of Haydn; but, if he desired to hear an earthly musician, he would select Boccherini:"—and Puppo, the

celebrated violinist, has described him thus:—"The tender Boccherini is the softer second self of Haydn." It is said, indeed, that Boccherini kept up a regular correspondence with Haydn,—these two great musicians endeavouring to enlighten each other respecting their compositions.

Felici Giardini, by the novel powers and grace of his execution, appears to have made, in England, almost as great a sensation as that created, eighty years later, by Paganini, with whom, also, he may be placed in competition, on the score of a capricious and difficult temper. He was born at Turin, in 1716; his musical education was received, at Milan, under Paladini, and subsequently, for the violin in particular, at Turin, under Somis, one of the best scholars of Corelli. At the age of 17, animated by the hope of fame, he went to Rome, and afterwards to Naples. At the latter city, he obtained, by the recommendation of Jomelli, a post far too humble for his large ambition—that of one of the *ripieni*, or make-weights, in the opera orchestra. Here his talents, nevertheless, began to appear, and he was accustomed to flourish and change passages, much more frequently than he ought to have done. "However," said he himself, in relating the circumstance to Dr. Burney, "I acquired great reputation among the ignorant for my impertinence; till, one night, during the opera, Jomelli, who had composed it, came into the orchestra, and seated himself close by me, when I determined to give the *Maestro di Capella* a touch of my taste and execution. In the symphony of the next song, which was in a pathetic style, I gave loose to my fingers and fancy; for which I was rewarded by the composer with—a violent slap in the face; which (added Giardini) was the best lesson I ever received from a great master in my life." Jomelli, after this,

was very kind, in a different and less indirect way, to this young and wonderful musician.

After a short continuance at Naples, followed by visits professional to the principal theatres in Italy, and by an enthusiastic reception at Berlin, Giardini came to England, and arrived in London in the year 1750. Here his performance on the violin, in which, at that time, he was considered to excel every other master in Europe, was heard, both in public and in private, with the most rapturous applause. His first public performance in London afforded a scene memorable among the triumphs of art. It was at a benefit Concert for old Cuzzoni, who sang in it with a thin, cracked voice, which almost frightened out of the little Theatre in the Haymarket the sons of those who had, perhaps, heard her, at the Great Theatre of the same street, with ecstacy supreme. But when Giardini came forward, and made a display of his powers in a solo and concerto, the applause was so long, loud and furious, as nothing but that bestowed on Garrick had probably ever equalled. His tone, bowing, execution, and graceful carriage of himself and his instrument, formed a combination that filled with astonishment the English public, unaccustomed to hear better performers than Festing, Brown and Collett.

Such was the estimation accruing to Giardini from his talents, that, in 1754, he was placed at the head of the opera orchestra. Two years afterwards, he joined the female singer Mingotti in attempting that labyrinth of disaster, the management of the Italian Opera ; but, although they acquired much fame, their management was not attended with success. During this time, Giardini composed several of the dramas that were performed. In leading the Opera band, he had the merit

of introducing improved discipline, and a new style of playing, much finer in itself, and more congenial with the poetry and music of Italy, than the level and languid manner of his predecessor, Festing, who had succeeded Castrucci (Hogarth's "Enraged Musician"), and had since, with inadequate powers, continued to maintain the post, with the exception of one or two seasons, during which Veracini had been in the ascendant.

Fashion, in the folly of its excess, has not often been seen to cut so extravagant a figure as on the occasion of the associated performances in private by Giardini and Mingotti, during the "high and palmy state" of their credit. The absolutism of Mrs. Fox Lane (afterwards Lady Bingley) over the fashionable world, as the enthusiastic patroness of these two artists, is a thing that satire might feast on. Rank, wealth, manhood, and beauty, prostrate before the domination of this "pollens matrona," were content (lest, forsooth! they should have "argued themselves unknown") to pay tax and tribute to her two favourites, and take a passport to the notice of "the town," in the shape of a benefit-ticket. At such scenes, it is not using too strong a figure to say that Folly must have clapped her hands, displayed her broadest grin, and given an extra jingle to the bells on her cap. To all who reflect, it scarcely needs to be observed that the false raptures and artificial stimulus, belonging to a system like this, are nearly as injurious as they are absurd;—that to pamper thus the artist, is not only to spoil him, but to injure the interests of the art, by making it the object of popular ridicule or disgust.

The contrast afforded by the close of Giardini's career with the brilliancy of its middle course, makes one think of Johnson's bitter association of "the patron

and the jail." Those were, truly, the days when patronage was a thing of rank luxuriance, that sometimes overgrew and choked the flowers of genius to which it fastened itself. The case is now, happily, become somewhat different—the free and fostering breath of general opinion being the air in which talent has learned to seek and attain its full growth; and a more limited resort being had to the forcing influence of the aristocratic temperature.*

The losses that Giardini had sustained on that ready road to ruin, the Italian Opera, drove him back to the resources of his own particular talent; and he entered upon the occupation of teaching in families of rank and fashion, at the same time continuing unrivalled as a leader, a solo-player, and a composer for his favourite instrument.

Mr. Gardiner, of Leicester, has made the following record concerning him, in his "*Music and Friends*," on the occasion of a concert at the above town, in 1774:—"There I heard the full and prolonged tones of Giardini's violin. He played a concerto, in which he introduced the then popular air "Come, haste to the wedding," which moved the audience to a state of ecstacy, but now would disgust every one by its vulgarity. He was a fine-figured man, superbly dressed in green and gold; the breadth of the lace upon his coat, with the three large gold buttons on the sleeve, made a rich appearance, which still glitters on my imagination."

Giardini resided in England until the year 1784, when he went to Naples, under the protection and patronage of

* "I cannot understand how *Arts* and *Sciences* should be subject unto any such fantastical, giddy, or inconsiderate toyish conceits, as ever to be said to be *in fashion*, or *out of fashion*."—*Mace's Music's Monument.*

Sir William Hamilton. There he continued five years, and then returned to this country; but his reception was not what it had formerly been. Fashion is a goddess of so gay a turn as cannot assort with infirmity; and an old favourite is but too likely to find that favour easily gets a divorce from age. The health of the Italian was greatly impaired, and sinking fast under a confirmed dropsy. With a dimmer eye, a feebler hand, and doubtless an aching heart, he found himself still doomed to the prosecution of his calling, when all his former excellence was lost. Instead of *leading* in all the most difficult parts, he now played in public only the tenor in quartetts that he had recently composed. After attempting, unsuccessfully, a burletta opera at the little Theatre in the Haymarket, he was at length (in 1793) induced to go to St. Petersburgh, and afterwards to Moscow, with his burletta performers. The most cruel disappointment, however, attended him in each of these cities; in the latter of which, he died, at the age of 80, in a state (as far as it could be discovered) of poverty and wretchedness.

It is certain that the wayward and splenetic character evinced by this brilliant artist, was his bane through the greater part of his life. To enquire how much of that character was indigenous to the man, and how much the evil fruit of the private-patronage system, were, perhaps, to consider too curiously. That he was careless of his own interest, and that he quarrelled with some of his most valuable friends, can excite little surprise, when we note the furor of favoritism, the perversity of petting, that were thrust upon him. We must not expect, in the *morale* of the musician

"Made drunk with honor, and debauch'd with praise,"

that "sterner stuff," which we look for in the philosopher.

As a composer for the instrument on which he shone, Giardini is not entitled to rank very high. His Solos and Concertos, numerous, pleasing and of neat effect, were not of so marked a character as to ensure any great duration to their popularity; nor did they admit of any severe analysis as to science in their structure. It is from his *playing* that his high reputation is derived; and he confirmed into triumph, by more than thirty years of brilliant performance, the previously growing favour of the instrument in England, where indeed he may be said to have completely reformed the Violin system. A living testimony to the excellence of his playing, with a few words as to its manner, has been given, not long since, by Parke, the oboist, who heard him in 1776, and states that he displayed a fund of grace and expression—that his tone united sweetness with power—and (an odd addendum) that he made use of strings so large as to give rise to the idea that his fingers must have been blistered by the necessary pressure he gave them.

Antonio Lolli, born at Bergamo, in 1728, attained eminence in his own country, and afterwards (from 1762 to 1773) became Concert-Master to the Duke of Wurtemburg. Subsequently he went to Russia, where he obtained, from the Empress, Catherine II, a signal token of her admiration, in the shape of a violin-bow, made for him by her order, and bearing on it an inscription in her own potential autograph:—"*Archet fait par ordre de Catherine II, pour l'incomparable Lolli.*" In 1785, he visited England, whence he proceeded to Spain, and thence to Paris, where he performed at the *Spirituel* and other Concerts. In 1788, he returned to Italy, where he glorified his own name with the title of Concert-Master to the Empress of Russia; and in 1794, he

was at Vienna, ascribing himself under the same character to the King of Naples. He died, after a lingering illness, at Naples, in 1802. His excellence in practice was chiefly evinced in quick movements: he was rarely inclined to exhibit in an adagio.* An anecdote in proof of his professional assiduity is recorded by Gerber. When he entered on his engagement at Stuttgardt, in 1762, he found a superior there, in the person of Nardini. This circumstance roused all his energies, which speedily took a settled purpose. He requested the Duke to allow him a year's leave of absence, to travel; instead of which, he retired, diligent, but disingenuous, to a secluded village, and applied himself indefatigably to his instrument. At the end of the accorded absence, he returned from his pretended journey, "clarior è tenebris," and shone forth with such effect, that Nardini gave up the contest, and returned to Italy.

With regard to the compositions of Lolli, it is known that he never wrote more than the theme, and obtained from other hands the bass, or the parts for the several instruments: yet it is curious to note that he gives difficult passages, of considerable compass, to be executed on the *fourth string* only. There are extant various sets of his Solos, a Preceptive Treatise on the Violin, &c.

Gaetano Pugnani, first violinist to the King of Sardinia, was born at Turin, in the year 1728. At a very early age, he began to practise the instrument on which he was destined to excel. His first tutor was Somis, his countryman, already named as one of the most distinguished scholars of Corelli. After displaying

* It was remarked, while he was in England, that his execution was astonishing, but that he dealt occasionally in such tricks as tended to excite the risible faculty, rather than the admiration, of his auditors.

his extraordinary abilities at the Sardinian Court, Pugnani went to Paris, and received the highest applause at the *Concert Spirituel*, as an admitted rival of J. Stamitz, Gaviniès, and Pagin.

Pugnani afterwards visited many parts of Europe, and remained a considerable time in England. It was here that he composed a great portion of his violin music. In 1770, he returned to Italy; and, at Turin, founded a school for violinists, as Corelli had at Rome, and Tartini at Padua. From this practical academy issued the first performers of the latter part of the eighteenth century; among whom were Viotti, Bruni and Oliveri. Pugnani's style of execution is recorded to have been broad and noble, and characterized by that commanding sweep of the bow which afterwards formed so grand a feature in the performance of Viotti; the germs of whose high qualities are clearly traceable to his master. It has been remarked, that all the pupils of Pugnani proved excellent leaders. To lead well, was his most distinguishing excellence; and he possessed the art of transmitting it to others. In the orchestra, says Rangoni, he commanded like a general in the midst of his soldiers. His bow was the baton of authority, which every performer obeyed with the most scrupulous exactitude. With a single stroke of this bow, he could correct the erroneous, or animate the lethargic. He even indicated to the *actors* the tone and sentiment in which they ought to deliver their respective melodies, and brought every thing to that harmony of expression, without which the operatic scene fails of its most powerful charm. His strong and acute mind possessed with the great object to which every leader ought to attend, he promptly and powerfully seized all the grand points, the character, the style and taste of the composition, and impressed it

upon the feelings of the performers, both vocal and instrumental.

Pugnani, in addition to the display of brilliant and powerful abilities as a performer, gave, in his compositions, evidence of a free and elegant imagination. His several instrumental pieces, which consist of solos, trios, quartetts, quintetts and overtures, were published variously, in London, Amsterdam and Paris. On the Continent, they are still in some request, but are become very scarce. They display an eloquence of melody, and an animated and nervous manner. The ideas are natural, both in themselves and in their succession ; and, however pointed and striking, never desert the style of the *motivo*. The operas of this distinguished master, seven or eight in number, were all highly successful ; and there is scarcely a theatre in Italy, at which some of them have not been performed.

Amongst the anecdotes that have been related of Pugnani, are the following. In his early youth, but when already much advanced on the violin, feeling far from satisfied with the degree of excellence he had attained, he resolved to quit Paris for Padua, in order to see Tartini, to consult him on his playing, and to improve himself under his instruction. Desired by that great master to give him a specimen of his performance, he requested of him, beforehand, to express frankly his opinion of his style and manner. Before he had played many bars, Tartini suddenly seized his arm, saying, " Too loud, my good friend ; too loud !" Pugnani began afresh ; when, arriving at the same passage, his auditor again stopped him short, exclaiming, " Too soft, my good friend ; too soft !" He immediately laid down his instrument, and solicited Tartini to admit him among his scholars. His request was granted ; and, excellent

violinist as he really already was, he began his practice *de novo*, and, under the guidance of his new instructor, soon became one of the first performers of his time. Not long after this, at the house of Madame Denis, Pugnani heard Voltaire recite a poetical composition, in a style that enchanted him; and he, in his turn, at the lady's request, began to perform on his violin; when, vexed at the interruption and ill-breeding of Voltaire's loud conversation*, he suddenly stopped, and put his violin into the case, saying, "M. Voltaire fait très-bien les vers, mais, quant à la musique, il n'y entend pas le diable." Once, in performing a concerto before a numerous company, he became so excited, on arriving at an *ad libitum* passage, and so lost in attention to his playing, that, thinking himself alone, he walked about the room, "turbine raptus ingenii," till he had finished his very beautiful cadence.

Pugnani died at the city of his birth, in 1798. The violinist, Cartier, has written his eulogium in few words, but of strong import:—"He was the master of Viotti."

Giovanni Mane Giornovichi (or Giarnovick, or Jarnowick, as he has been variously called) was born at Palermo, in 1745, and had Antonio Lolli for his preceptor. Resorting to Paris for his first public display, he appeared at the *Concert Spirituel*, with indifferent success, but, by perseverance, soon turned the scale of opinion in his favour so effectually, that, during a space of ten years, the style of Giornovichi was in fashion in

* Voltaire's contempt for *bad* playing seems to have equalled his indifference towards *good*, as may be evidenced in the following lines from his caustic pen:—

toi, dont le violon
Sous un archêt maudit par Apollon
D'un ton si dur a *râclé*, &c.

the French capital. His sway there was terminated by the superior power of Viotti, and he quitted France about the year 1780, proceeding to Prussia, where, in 1782, he was engaged as first violin in the Royal Chapel of Potsdam. He was, subsequently, for some time in Russia*. Between the years 1792 and 1796, he was in high vogue in various parts of England, but lost his popularity through a dispute with an eminent professor, in which the sense of the public went against him. A residence of some years in Hamburgh, a shorter stay at Berlin, and then a change to St. Petersburgh, brought him to the end of his career. He died of apoplexy, in 1804.

The eccentricity which marked the character of this artist, is shown in various anecdotes that have been current respecting him. On one occasion, at Lyons, he announced a concert, at six francs a ticket, but failed to collect an audience. Finding the Lyonnese so retentive of their money, he postponed his performance to the following evening, with the temptation of tickets at half the price. A crowded company was the result; but their expectations were suddenly let down by the discovery that "the advertiser" had quitted the town *sans cérémonie*. At another time, being in the music-shop of Bailleux, he accidentally broke a pane of glass.

* Michael Kelly, who heard this artist at Vienna, on his return from Russia, makes the following mention of him:—

"Giornovick, who was on his way from Russia to Paris, had been many years first concerto-player at the court of Petersburgh. He was a man of a certain age, but in the full vigour of talent: his tone was very powerful, his execution most rapid, and his taste, above all, alluring. No performer, in my remembrance, played such pleasing music. He generally closed his concertos with a rondo, the subject of which was some popular Russian air, to which he composed variations, with enchanting taste."

"Those who break windows must pay for them," said Bailleux. "Right," replied the other; "how much is it?" "Thirty sous." "Well, there's a three-franc piece." "But I have no small change." "Never mind that," Giornovichi replied; "we are now quits!" and immediately dashed his cane through a second square—thus taking *double panes* to make himself disagreeable.

The authoress of the "Memoirs of the Empress Josephine" has furnished an anecdote connected with his sojourn in London. He gave a concert, which was very fully attended. On the commencement of a concerto which he had to perform, the company continued conversing together, while their whispering was intermingled with the clattering of tea-cups and saucers—for it was then customary to serve the company with tea throughout the evening, during the performance as well as in the intervening pauses. Giornovichi turned to the orchestra, and desired the performers to stop. "These people," said he, "know nothing about music. I will give them something better suited to their taste. Any thing is good enough for *drinkers of warm water*." So saying, he immediately struck up the air, "J'ai du bon tabac." The best of the matter was, he was overwhelmed with applause; the second piece was listened to with great attention, and the circulation of the tea-cups was actually suspended until its conclusion.

"Giornovick," says Michael Kelly, again, in his "Reminiscences," "was a desperate duellist, quarrelled with Shaw, the leader of the Drury Lane orchestra, at an oratorio, and challenged him. I strove all in my power to make peace between them. Giornovick could not speak a word of English*, and Shaw could not speak

* Apropos of this deficiency of English, I find an anecdote in

a word of French. They both agreed that I should be the mediator between them. I translated what they said to each other, most faithfully; but, unfortunately, Shaw, in reply to one of Giornovick's accusations, said, "Pooh! pooh!"—"Sacre!" said Giornovick, "what is the meaning of dat 'pooh! pooh?' I will not hear a word until you translate me 'pooh! pooh!'" My good wishes to produce harmony between them, for some time, were frustrated, because I really did not know how to translate 'pooh! pooh!' into French or Italian. I, however, at last succeeded in making them friends; but the whole scene was truly ludicrous†."

The mettlesome *vivacity* of this strange being was further shown in his intercourse with the Chevalier St. George, who was expert at the sword, as well as the *bow*. Giornovichi often disagreed with this formidable master of fence, and, one day, in the heat of a dispute, dealt him a box on the ear. Instead of resenting it, however, by means of his "so potent art," St. George turned round, with laudable self-restraint, to a person who was present, and said, "*J'aime trop son talent pour me battre avec lui!*" ("I am too fond of his talent, to fight him.")

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the book of Parke, the oboist. He is describing the return from a dinner-party.—"When we arrived at Tottenham-court Road, there being several coaches on the stand, one was called for Jarnovicki, to convey him home; but, on its coming up, although he had been in London several years, he could not muster up English enough to name the street in which he lived; and, none of the party knowing his residence, it produced a dilemma, in which he participated, till, suddenly recollecting himself, he broke out singing, *Marlbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre*, which enabled his English friends to direct the coachman to Marlborough Street."

† Parke, also, mentions the occurrence of this dispute, and the challenge—stating, as the occasion, that Shaw had refused to leave his proper station in the orchestra, to accompany Giornovichi.

" Jarnowick," says a recent critic, " was a sort of erratic star or meteor, which cannot be brought into the system of the regular planets of the violin. Slightly educated, and shallow as a musician, his native talent, and the facility with which he was able to conquer mechanical difficulties, rendered him so brilliant and powerful a player, that, for a time, he was quite the rage, both in France and England. We have been told, by a gentleman who knew him well," adds this writer, " that he has seen him, with his violin in his hand, walking about his room, and groping about on the strings for basses to the melodies he was composing. His concertos are agreeable and brilliant, but destitute of profundity and grandeur, and are, therefore, totally thrown aside. His performance was graceful and elegant, and his tone was pure. He was remarkably happy in his manner of treating simple and popular airs as *rondos*, returning ever and anon to his theme, after a variety of brilliant excursions, in a way that used to fascinate his hearers. But, both as a composer and a performer, the effect he produced was ephemeral, and has left no trace behind it. He contributed nothing either to the progress of music, or to that of the instrument which he cultivated."

In giving the reverse side of the picture, there appears to be here a little exaggeration of its defects. That so eminent a performer should have contributed *nothing* to the progress of his instrument, is scarcely to be held probable. The crowds he drew, and the admiration he excited, must surely have been the means of diffusing some increased regard for the instrument of whose single powers he made such brilliant exhibition. To the steady advancement of the art, through the formation of pupils, he might contribute nothing; but he

must have added something to its success, by stimulating the public disposition to encourage it. To create admirers, is of less importance than to make proficients; and yet it is an achievement of *some* value, inasmuch as it promotes the *demand* for proficients. Even when the public, for personal reasons, withdrew their patronage from Giornovichi, they only transferred, in favor of others, the admiration for violin solo-playing, which he had been one of the agents to instil into them: and thus it is that no performer of great abilities, unless, by introducing a vicious style, he corrupts taste (which has not been charged upon Giornovichi), can be justly said to be destitute of advantageous influence upon his art.

Giovanni Battista Viotti, the first violinist of his age, and the enlightened originator of the modern order of violin-playing, was born in 1755, at Fontaneto, a small village in Piedmont. Possessing the happiest dispositions for his art, the progress he made under Pugnani was so rapid, that, at the age of twenty, he was chosen to fill the situation of first violinist to the Royal Chapel of Turin. After about three years' residence there, he proceeded on his travels, having already attained maturity of excellence. From Berlin, he directed his course towards Paris, where he displayed his talents in the *Concert Spirituel*, and speedily obliged Giornovichi, who was then figuring as a star of the first pretensions, to "pale his ineffectual fire." The concertos of Giornovichi, agreeable and brilliant as they were, and supported by his graceful and elegant playing, lost their attraction when brought into rivalry with the beauty and grandeur of Viotti's compositions, aided by the noble and powerful manner in which he executed them.

Viotti's fame very soon drew on him the notice of the French Court; and he was sent for to Versailles by

Marie Antoinette. A new concerto of his own composition, to be performed at a courtly festival, was to afford a treat worthy of Royalty; and every one of the privileged was impatient to hear him. At the appointed hour, a thousand lights illumined the magnificent musical saloon of the Queen; the most distinguished symphonists of the chapel-royal, and of the theatres (ordered for the service of their Majesties) were seated at the desks where the parts of the music were distributed. The Queen, the Princes, the ladies of the royal family, and all the persons belonging to their Court, having arrived, the concert commenced. The performers, in the midst of whom Viotti was distinguished, received from him their impulse, and appeared to be animated by the same spirit. The symphony proceeded with all the fire and all the expression of him who conceived and directed it. At the expiration of the *tutti*, the enthusiasm was at its height; but etiquette forbade applause; the orchestra was silent. In the saloon, it seemed as if every one present was forewarned by this very silence to breathe more softly, in order to hear more perfectly the *solo* which he was about to commence. The strings, trembling under the lofty and brilliant bow of Viotti, had already sent forth some prelusive sounds, when suddenly a great noise was heard from the next apartment. *Place à Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois!* His Highness entered, preceded by servants carrying flambeaux, and accompanied by a numerous train of bustling attendants. The folding-doors were thrown open, and the concert was interrupted. A moment after, the symphony began again; "Silence! Viotti is going to play." In the meantime, the *Comte d'Artois* cannot remain quietly seated: he rises, and walks about the room, addressing his discourse loudly to several ladies. Viotti looks round with

indignant surprise at the interruption, puts his violin under his arm, takes the music from the stand, and walks off, leaving the concert, her Majesty and his Royal Highness, to the reproaches of all the audience—and leaving his biographers, afterwards, in some doubt whether a just independence of spirit, or a petulance beyond the occasion, should be regarded as the motive to this premature *finale*. Of those who read the anecdote, some may associate it with the story of "the *bear* and fiddle," while others, siding with Viotti, may consider the interruption that provoked him as something parallel to Beranger's ironical summons of

Bas, bas!
Chapeau bas!
Place au Marquis de Carabas!

It has never been satisfactorily discovered what were the reasons which induced Viotti, at an early period of his life, to relinquish all idea of ever performing in public. Some have referred to the incident above narrated, as the cause of this; but they who pretended to be well acquainted with his character, have asserted that he disdained the applause of the multitude, because it was afforded, almost indiscriminately, to superiority of talent, *and* to presumptuous mediocrity. It is well known that he rejected the solicitations of people who were termed of the great world, because he would have no other judges than such as were worthy of appreciating him; and that, notwithstanding the pretensions asserted by the great and fashionable persons of his day, on the score of knowing every thing, and of being the supreme arbiters of arts, of artists, and of taste, he observed that it was very rare to find among them men capable of a profound sentiment, or who could discover in others any thing beyond their exterior, and judge of things

otherwise than by the same superficial admeasurement. He, however, yielded again to the eagerness which was evinced for hearing him,—but on two occasions only; of which the one did honour to his heart; and the other, as it serves to acquaint us more intimately with his character, may be here related.

On the fifth story, in a little street in Paris, not far from the *Place de la Révolution*, in the year 1790, lodged a deputy of the Constituent Assembly, an intimate and trusty friend of Viotti's. The conformity of their opinions, the same love of the arts and of liberty, an equal admiration of the genius and works of Rousseau, had formed this connection between two men who thenceforward became inseparable. It was during the exciting times of enthusiasm and of hope, that the ardent heart of Viotti could not remain indifferent to sentiments which affected all great and generous minds. He shared them with his friend. This person solicited him strongly to comply with the desire which some of the first personages in the kingdom expressed to hear him—if only for once. Viotti at last consented, but upon one condition—namely, that the concert should be given in the modest and humble retreat of *the fifth floor! La fortune passe par tout*—'We have,' said he, 'long enough descended to *them:* but the times are changed; they must now mount, in order to raise themselves to *us*.' This project was no sooner thought of, than prepared for execution. Viotti and his friend invited the most celebrated artists of the day to grace this novel festival:—Garat, whom nature had endowed with a splendid voice, and a talent of expression still more admirable—Herman, Steibelt, Rode (the pupil of Viotti). To Puppo was confided the direction of the orchestra; and to Bréval, the office of seconding Viotti. Among the

great female *artistes* of the day, were Madame Davrigny, with Mandini, Viganoni, and Morichelli, a lady as celebrated for her talents as for her charms. On the appointed day, all the friends arrived. The bust of Rousseau, encircled with garlands of flowers, was uncovered, and formed the only ornament of this novel music-saloon. It was there that Princes, notwithstanding the pride of rank; great ladies, despite the vanity of titles; pretty women, and superannuated fops, clambered for the first time up to the *fifth story*, to hear the almost celestial music of Boccherini, performed by Viotti; and, that nothing might be wanting to complete the triumph of the artist, there was not one of these persons who, after the concert, descended without regret, although it was the lot of some of them to return to sumptuous palaces, and into the midst of etiquette, luxury and splendour.

Among those friends who enjoyed the envied privilege of hearing this great artist in private, was Madame Montgerault, who had a country-house in the valley of Montmorency. Some of his most brilliant ideas had their access in the society of this amiable and gifted woman, in whom he found an enthusiasm for the art equal to his own. She would frequently seat herself at the piano, and begin a Concerto *all' improvviso*; while Viotti, catching in an instant the spirit of the *motivo*, would accompany her extemporaneous effusions, and display all the magic of his skill.

The spirit and honesty of Viotti's character are not ill shewn in the following anecdote. Giuseppe Puppo, who possessed no mean command over the violin, and whose talents were acknowledged by Viotti with the readiest candour, cherished the more than foolish vanity of boasting himself a scholar of the great Tartini, which

was known to be an untruth, or, as a French term leniently expresses such deviations, "une inexactitude." On some public occasion, when M. Lahoussaye chanced to be present (who was really a disciple, and an enthusiastic one, of Tartini's), Viotti begged him, as a favor, to give him a specimen of Tartini's manner of playing. "And now," said he, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all the company—"now, Signor Puppo, listen to my friend, Monsieur Lahoussaye, and you will be enabled to form an idea as to how Tartini played!"

Viotti's stay in Paris was abruptly terminated by the bursting of the revolutionary storm in 1790, which drove him to England. His debût in London, at the memorable concerts under the management of Salomon, was as brightly marked as it had been in Paris. The connoisseurs were delighted by his originality and felicitous boldness, tempered as these qualities were by a pure and exalted taste. In the years 1794 and 1795, he had some share in the management of the King's Theatre, and subsequently became leader of the band in that Temple of (occasional) Concord. But, as an ancient author has said, success is a thing of glass, and, just when it begins to wear its brightest looks, it provokingly meets with a fracture. The quiet and blameless habits of life of the great musician had not sufficed to exempt him from the officious visitations of political suspicion, prompted, it has been supposed, by some whispering tale of slander, from professional envy. The result was, that poor Viotti suddenly received an order from the Government to leave England immediately. By what subtle ingenuity of apprehension, the proceedings of a violin-player came to be associated, at the Home-Office, with the Revolutions of Empires, is as yet a mystery more dark than Delphos. Possibly some

future D'Israeli, enquiring for "farther particulars within," may find the means of enlightening the world on this transaction, which certainly does seem, at present, to afford scantier material for the historian than for the epigrammatist.

Thus expelled from the country which had evinced towards others so many generous proofs of hospitality, Viotti passed over to Holland, and subsequently fixed himself in the seclusion of a beautiful spot near Hamburgh, named Schönfeld. Here he gave up his mind to the cares of composition, as most likely to displace or diminish those more painful ones which harassed his sensitive mind, on account of the treatment he had been subjected to. Some of his best works were the product of this retreat; including his celebrated *Six Duetts Concertante*, for two violins; in the preface to which, he touches on the circumstance that was still affecting him:—"Cet ouvrage est le fruit du loisir que le malheur me procure. Quelques morçeaux ont été dictés par la peine, d'autres par l'espoir;"—and indeed it has been justly remarked that it would be difficult to find any musical work that should seem to have proceeded more directly from a feeling heart, than these exquisite Duetts.

In Hamburgh, he met with his former competitor, Giornovichi, who, like himself, had been compelled to fly from Paris, the scene of his pristine glories. The latter gave two concerts in this place, attended with the meed of money, as well as that of praise; but the graver-minded Viotti could not be persuaded to appear in public, and imitate his example.

In 1801, Viotti found himself at liberty to return to London. Having determined to relinquish the musical profession, he devoted his resources, like Carbonelli of

foregone fame, to the ministry of Bacchus, and associated himself with a respectable member of the wine-trade. Disappointment was the issue, however, of this undertaking; and, after years of endeavour, he discovered that his whole fortune was gone. Thus reduced, he prevailed with his own struggling spirit to solicit some appointment from the French Court, and received, from Louis XVIII, the nomination to the management of the Grand Opera. Impelled anew by what Byron calls

"The various jolting's of life's hackney coach,"

he proceeded to Paris, and entered upon the office; but neither his age, nor his quiet character, was congenial with the temper of such a scene; and he retired, unsuccessful, but with the grant of a pension. He then came over to end his days in England, loving rather to be an *habitué* of London, than a citizen of the world; for he had become closely familiarized with the ways and habits of our metropolis, and seemed to have cherished an almost Johnsonian attachment to it. His previous cares and misfortunes, however, had left him little power to continue the race of life, already a protracted one; and, after visibly declining for some time, he died on the 3rd of March, 1824.

Viotti's long retirement from the profession of that art on which his fame was built, had not impaired his love of it, nor his inclination to support it. On the institution of the Philharmonic Society, that "decus et tutamen" of instrumental music in this country, he was one of the original members, and, as an honorary performer, not only led the band in turn with Salomon, F. Cramer, Yaniewicz, Spagnoletti and Vaccari, but, like them, interchanged direction and submission, by

taking his seat, on the other nights, among the *ripieni;* thus assisting to form an orchestral phalanx that certainly never was witnessed before, and is little likely to be surpassed.

Viotti was a person of feelings and sentiments far less artificial than are commonly produced in men whose intercourse with society is fostered by their powers of contributing to its amusement. Mixing, of necessity, a great deal with the world, he seems, nevertheless, in a remarkable degree, to have preserved himself from its corrupting influence; and though, as just remarked, he loved London much, there is very interesting evidence to shew that he loved nature more. The purity and rectitude of his taste—its association with the poetic and the true—stand thus recorded by one who had good opportunities of appreciating him :—"Never did a man attach so much value (says M. Eymar) to the simplest gifts of nature; and never did a child enjoy them more passionately. A simple violet, discovered in its lowly bed among the grass, would transport him with the liveliest joy; a pear, a plum, gathered fresh by his own hands, would, for the moment, make him the happiest of mortals. The perfume of the one had always something new to him, and the taste of the other something more delicious than before. His organs, all delicacy and sensibility, seemed to have preserved, undiminished, their youthful purity. In the country, everything was, to this extraordinary man, an object of fresh interest and enjoyment. The slightest impression seemed communicated to all his senses at once. Every thing affected his imagination; every thing spoke to his heart, and he yielded himself at once to its emotions."

The natural bias of his character receives further illustration in the sketch which he himself has given,

descriptive of his picking up one of the varieties of the popular *Ranz des Vaches,* among the mountains of Switzerland.

"The *Ranz des Vaches* which I send you," says he to a friend, "is neither that with which our friend Jean Jacques has presented us, nor that of which M. de la Borde speaks, in his work upon Music. I cannot say whether it is known or not; all I know is, that I heard it in Switzerland, and, once heard, I have never forgotten it since.

"I was sauntering alone, towards the decline of day, in one of those sequestered spots where we never feel a desire to open our lips. The weather was mild and serene; the wind (which I detest) was hushed; all was calm—all was unison with my feelings, and tended to lull me into that melancholy mood which, ever since I can remember, I have been accustomed to feel at the hour of twilight.

"My thoughts wandered at random, and my footsteps were equally undirected. My imagination was not occupied with any particular object, and my heart lay open to every impression of pensive delight. I walked forward; I descended the valleys, and traversed the heights. At length, chance conducted me to a certain valley, which, on rousing myself from my waking dream, I discovered to abound with beauties. It reminded me of one of those delicious retreats so beautifully described by Gesner: flowers, verdure, streamlets, all united to form a picture of perfect harmony. There, without being fatigued, I seated myself mechanically on a fragment of rock, and again fell into that kind of profound reverie, which so totally absorbed all my faculties, that I seemed to forget whether I was upon earth.

"While sitting thus, wrapped in this slumber of the

soul, sounds broke upon my ear, which were sometimes of a hurried, sometimes of a prolonged and sustained character, and were repeated, in softened tones, by the echoes around. I found they proceeded from a mountain-horn; and their effect was heightened by a plaintive female voice. Struck, as if by enchantment, I started from my lethargy, listened with breathless attention, and learned, or rather engraved upon my memory, the *Ranz des Vaches* which I send you. In order to understand all its beauties, you ought to be transplanted to the scene in which I heard it, and to feel all the enthusiasm that such a moment inspired."

This susceptibility of pure and simple emotions, which it is delightful to recognize as one of the attributes of real genius, was in Viotti associated with a clear and cultivated intellect. He passed much of his life in the society of the accomplished, the literary, and the scientific; and his active mind gathered strength and refinement from the intercourse. If the Horatian dictum be right, that

"Principibus placuisse viris haud ultima laus est,"

it may be added to the sum of Viotti's personal merits, that he gained the respect and esteem of the great, with whom he mixed on proper terms, not forgetful of their rank as persons of birth and fortune, nor of his own, as a man of rare talent. The strictest integrity and honour regulated his transactions; and his feelings were kind and benevolent. Thus it may be seen that his character, as a man, was calculated to give increased dignity and influence to his name as a musician.

In the latter capacity, it has, with great truth, been remarked of him, that though the *virtuosi* of the present day contrive to execute manual difficulties exceeding those which were attempted in his time, he has never

been surpassed in all the *highest* qualities that belong to performance on his instrument. His compositions for it remain, to this day, unrivalled in spirit and grandeur of design, graceful melody, and variety of expression; and they still furnish, when performed by the surviving disciples of his school, one of the most delightful treats which a lover of the great and beautiful in music can receive. The *Concerto*, in particular, which attained some of its improvements in the hands of the elegant Jarnowick, and the sweetly-expressive Mestrino, derived a marked advancement from Viotti, who gave to this style the character which seems so peculiarly its own, and brought it to a degree of elevation which it seems incapable of surmounting. The specimens of his composition in this line, that principally claim the attention of the amateurs of instrumental music, are those in G, in A minor, in D, and in E minor. The theme of the Concerto in D is in the highest degree brilliant, though it must not be forgotten that it is taken from a trio of Pugnani's in E flat.

It has been well suggested, as a hint to the solo-players at our London Concerts, that Viotti's Concertos offer material far more desirable for their use than those eternal "Airs with Variations," which convey to the feelings of the auditor so little sense of variety, and in general tend to exhibit nothing beyond the dexterity of what the Italians call a *spacca-nota*, or note-splitter.

The most popular of his *Trios* are Op. 16, 17, and 18. The whole of his *Duos* are admirable, as respects both invention and energy: they may be called Concertos in miniature*.

* Authentic editions of these charming productions will be found in the Catalogue of the Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co. who are the sole publishers of Viotti's Duos and Trios.

Among the disciples of the school of this great master, may be enumerated Rode (on the whole regarded as the best), Alday, Labarre, Vacher, Cartier, Pixis, Madame Paravicini, Mademoiselle Gerbini, and our countryman, Mori.

Francesco Vaccari, born at Modena, about the year 1772, commenced his practice of the instrument at the infantine age of five years, under the tutelage of his father, who, delighted with his quickness of apprehension, would frequently encourage him to play at sight, not by the gauds and "immoment toys" that are the common habits of childhood, but by gifts of new music. After four years of domestic study, he was introduced by his father to Pugnani, who, with a natural mistrust of precocious powers, did not like, at first, to be troubled with "child's-play," although, on hearing him, he could not refrain from applauding his execution. The boy went afterwards to Florence, and had instructions from Nardini. The habit so early instilled into him by his father, of playing at first sight, procured him a triumph at Mantua, when he was yet but thirteen; for he was enabled to execute, without hesitation, a new Concerto which Pichl, its composer, placed before him. In 1804, after he had visited most of the great towns in Italy, he obtained from the King of Spain the appointment of First Violin of his chamber-band. The disturbed state of that country drove him into Portugal; and he was, at two several periods, performing in England. Vaccari was distinguished by purity of tone and of taste, a tender expression, execution without trick, and a nice exactitude of intonation.

Masoni, a Florentine, born 1799, attained very brilliant powers of execution, which he displayed chiefly in foreign countries—quitting Italy in 1817, for South

America, from whence, after various migratory musical labours, he passed over to India, and stirred to liveliest emotion the languid people of Calcutta. In the spring of 1834, he visited England, where his *tours de force*, and surprising dexterities of bowing, would have won for him a more copious admiration than they did, if, instead of coming so closely in the rear of the Genoese "Miracle of Man," who had well nigh exhausted our stock of musical sympathies, he had been his antecedent. I would here ask the gentle reader's indulgence towards the following bit of measured hyperbole, perpetrated at the above time, and admitted into a weekly publication of Mr. Leigh Hunt's:—

If your soul be not too *drony*,
Haste, to hear renowned Masoni!
Scarce Napoleon (nick-named Boney)
Was more wondrous than Masoni!
'Pollo's pet, Euterpe's crony,
Is the exquisite Masoni.
All the sweets that live in honey
Are concentred in Masoni!
Fiddlers *should* be rich and *toney*—
This—and *more*, is great Masoni.
Swifter, far, than hare or poney,
Run the triplets of Masoni—
And Astonishment bends *low* knee
To the flights of high Masoni!
Utterly *himself* unknown he
Should be, who *not* knows Masoni.
Dead must be the heart, and *stony*,
That is moved not by Masoni!
Money, without ceremony,
Shower'd should be on Masoni!
E'en from Greece Colocotroni
Well might come, to hear Masoni!
So, again I tell ye, *on'y*
Go, and listen to Masoni!

The length to which these notices of the artists of Italy has already extended, is one of the reasons precluding detail with respect to some others of the later names belonging to that country. Paganini, however, is neither to be thus dismissed, nor to be here briefly treated of at the end of a chapter. To him, as standing alone in the history and practice of his art, and as forming an object of very widely-diffused curiosity, I propose devoting a separate notice in the ensuing chapter. I cannot, in the mean time, omit wholly to advert to the name of Spagnoletti, whose taste and refinement, in the conspicuous situation which he filled for so many years in London, rendered him a highly valued model for the attention of our own cultivators of the instrument. Who is there amongst those who were frequenters of the King's Theatre, during his time of office, that will not recollect, with feelings of interest, the delicate grace of Spagnoletti's playing—his obviously intense, yet not obtrusive, enthusiasm—and his oft-repeated sidelong depressions of the head, as if to drink in more fully, at the left ear, the delicious tones which he enticed from his own instrument? His peculiar sensitiveness under the impression of a false note, and his liberality of spirit, and readiness to speak commendingly of his brethren of the bow, are among the further traits which denoted him to those who had the opportunity of closer observation. Spagnoletti's original name is said to have been Paolo Diana. I have heard an anecdote which, if it may be depended on, exemplifies his quickness of temper. It was to the effect that Spagnoletti, having chanced to quarrel one morning with Ambrogetti, challenged him on the spot; and that the singer put aside the abrupt invitation, by the phlegmatic remark that he had *not breakfasted!*

CHAPTER III.

PAGANINI.

" Natura il fece, e poi ruppe la stampa."—*Ariosto.*

" The glory, jest, and riddle of the world."—*Pope.*

WHO has not heard of Paganini—and who, that boasts of an ear, has not heard Paganini himself? Fame, catching up the echoes of his glory, has caused them to reverberate through her trump, and to *far furore* even to the uttermost parts of the civilized world; and the hero himself, following in her rear, has gone forth to fulfil her proclamations, to reap his laurels, to achieve the general conquest of ears, and to receive in gold the tribute of admiring nations! Tongues and pens have vied with each other in celebrating his name; and *'Ercles' vein* has been drawn upon in his behalf, till its exhausted stream could no further go.

NICOLO PAGANINI came into this breathing world at Genoa. The date of his birth, like most of the circumstances of his life, has been variously represented; but the most probable account fixes it on the 18th of February, 1784. His parents were of humble rank, but not so low as has been pretended in some of the " suppositions hypothetical" that have been mixed up with the history of their marvel-moving son. To suit the humor

of these fancies, the *conjectured* father has been depressed to the condition of a street-porter, bearing (along with his burdens) some name too obscure to be recorded; while the person known as Paganini *père* has been asserted to possess no other rights of paternity than what are conferred by adoption. This story, were it a true one, would reflect no discredit on an artist who has owed to his own genius the wide celebrity attaching to his name. "Miserum est aliorum incumbere famæ," says the Roman poet; and the feeling of modern times is daily more and more confirming the sentiment. By another version, the father of Paganini has been styled a small trader, with a large tendency to seek his fortune through the calculation of lottery-chances. His actual station, as appears most likely, was originally that of a mercantile clerk; and it is concurrently allowed that this father, putative or positive, had music enough in his soul, or in his head, to perceive the indications of the faculty in his infant son, and to resolve on its full development; although the means he took for this purpose were as little creditable to his paternal pretensions, as they were injudicious with reference to their object. Ere yet the boy, however, had received into his tiny hands the instrument that was destined to make him "a miracle of man," the world, it appears, was very near being deprived of him altogether! It is stated that, at the age of four years, he was attacked by the measles, attended, in his case, with unusually aggravated symptoms. So extraordinary an influence did the disease exercise on his nervous system, that he remained during an entire day in the state of catalepsy, or apparent death, and had actually been enveloped in a shroud, when a slight movement fortunately revealed the fact of his existence, and saved him from the horrors of a premature interment.

The musical discipline adopted by his father appears to have begun in pretty close sequence to this shock; and the days of hard work for poor little Paganini were made to commence, by a shameful perversion, before he could plainly speak. As soon as he could hold a violin, his father put one into his hands, and made him sit beside him from morning till night, to practise it. The willing enthusiasm of the child, as well as the tenderness of his age, might have disarmed the severity of any ordinary preceptor; but the rigor of a stern father, when sharpened by ambition and avarice, *can* forget the measure of an infant's powers. The slightest fault, the most pardonable inadvertence, was harshly visited upon the Liliputian performer; and even the privation of food was sometimes resorted to, as part of the barbarous system to enforce precocity. A lasting influence of baneful kind was thus wrought upon a constitution naturally delicate and sensitive: the sickly child, incapable of attaining a healthful maturity, was merged into the suffering man.

His mother, with equal but more tender zeal for the development of the talent of young Paganini, succeeded in inspiring him with no slight portion of her own enthusiasm, by persuading him that an angel had appeared to her in a vision, and had assured her that he should outstrip all competition as a performer on the violin. Whether this vision was the result of a pardonable stratagem, or whether it was really the dream of a southern imagination, it is certain that it had the greatest effect on the mind of the infant artist, whose instinctive and irresistible inclination for the art made him an easy recipient of this maternal tale of encouragement. He began also to relish the domestic plaudits which were occasionally awarded to him for the boldness wherewith

he produced new, if not legitimate, effects, indicative of future mastery over the powers of the instrument; for the instinct of his mind towards *the extraordinary* was, even thus early, a thing clearly discernible. He speedily outstripped his father's slender reach of musical knowledge, as well as that of a minor violinist named Cervetto, who, for a short time, attempted to teach him. Giacomo Costa, director of the orchestra, and first violin in the principal churches, at Genoa, was next charged with his musical direction, and led him more rapidly onwards. At this period (when he was about eight years old), he was to be seen performing some three times a week in the churches, and at private musical parties, upon a fiddle that looked nearly as large as himself. At this time, too, he composed his first Violin Sonata, which, with others of his early musical pennings, is, unfortunately, not extant. A year later, he made what was considered his public *début*, in the great theatre of Genoa, at the request of the noted singers, Marchesi and Albertinotti, who begged of his father to allow the youthful artist to play for their benefit, undertaking, in return, to sing for Paganini at the first concert he should offer to the public. On both occasions, he played a series of variations, believed to be his own, on the French republican air, "La Carmagnole," which were received with a force of approbation that seemed to carry with it the conviction of his future fame. Already, indeed, had his native genius urged him into a new path, both as to *fingering* and the management of the *bow*.

Stimulated by the opening prospects of solid advantage, his father next carried him to Parma, then the residence of Alessandro Rolla, in order to place him under the care of that celebrated composer. It so hap-

pened, on their arrival, that Rolla was confined to his room by indisposition; and the strangers, having been shown into a neighbouring apartment, found there, on a table, the score of a work which the composer had just finished. At the suggestion of his father, Paganini took up the violin which lay by the manuscript, and performed the new concerto at sight, with so much point and precision as to raise the sick composer from his bed, that he might ascertain to what master's hand he owed this agreeable surprise! The father, having explained the object of their visit, was assured by Rolla that he was incapable of adding any thing to his son's acquirements: he advised them to go to Paër, who was then the director of the Conservatory at Parma. Paër, in his turn, directed his visitors to his old master, Giretti, who received young Paganini as one of his pupils, and for six months gave him regular lessons in counterpoint. The good use which he made of this short apprenticeship is proved by the four-and-twenty fugues which he composed in the course of it. His rapid progress inspired Paër with so lively an interest in his success, that *he* also devoted several hours a day to his instruction, and, at the end of four months, entrusted him with the composition of a *duo*, which was eminently successful. But these advantages were interrupted by the removal of Paër to Venice, where he had undertaken the composition of an opera.

Thus additionally qualified for the gratification of the "auri sacra fames" in the paternal breast, Paganini was now hawked about the country in a professional tour (at the commencement of 1797), through the principal cities of Lombardy; after which the father and son returned to Genoa, where the youthful artist was again subjected to those daily toils which had previously been

forced on him with such wanton rigor: but the bonds were not to be of much longer endurance. In his 14th year, he was permitted, under the protection of an elder brother, to attend the Musical Festival of St. Martin, which is annually celebrated at Lucca, in the month of November; and, after meeting with a very flattering reception in all his public appearances, he extended his tour among the towns in the neighbourhood. The extreme degree of severity and restraint, with which his education had hitherto been conducted, was now beginning to work its natural result. At the age of fifteen, finding himself relieved from all effectual control by means of the ascendancy of his talent, and capable of attaining, through the same means, unlimited pecuniary supplies, he commenced the itinerant system on his own account; and soon, by a reaction of mind, that is in no degree surprising, acquired a decided partiality for a course of life that was accompanied by freedom from the trammels of such a father. The bonds of affection towards that persecuting parent were only loosened, however, not severed; for, after acquiring, by his independent exertions, a sum equal to about a thousand pounds, he proposed to assign a portion of it towards the maintenance of his father and mother. The cupidity of the former rejected this, and demanded the whole. The interest of the capital was then offered, equally in vain; and the violence of the father proceeded to the extent (as it has been asserted) of threatening Paganini with instant death, unless the whole of the principal were relinquished to him. This outrage, supposing it true, appears but a concentration, as it were, of the ill usage more diffusely applied before. To procure peace—perhaps to save his life—Paganini gave up the greater part of the sum.

Resuming the exercise of his emancipated powers,

Paganini visited many parts of Italy, and was flattered and rewarded in all. The intoxication of his rapid successes, combined with his joy at the escape from domestic fetters, seem to have led him into some youthful excesses at this period, and to have made the roving course of his travel rather *too* close a type of his moral career—

> Erring here, and wandering there,
> Pleas'd with transgression every where.

The increased celebrity which he afterwards acquired, or rather, perhaps, the jealous envy by which such celebrity is commonly pursued, has exercised a magnifying effect upon these early aberrations, and presented them as crimes of a serious and disgraceful nature. Whenever duly examined, they will be probably found to shrink back into something not greatly beyond peccadillo proportions. The feverish and unhealthy excitement besetting his peculiar position should be taken into full account, in forming a moral estimate of his youthful course. That the seductions of the gaming-table for a while swayed his fancy, and checquered his fortunes, is made clear by his own confession, which I will here extract from the interesting "Notice Biographique" by Monsieur Fétis (written as a *pendant* to the Collection of Paganini's Compositions, about to appear in Paris), to which pamphlet I am indebted for some of the additional facts in the present sketch.

"I shall never forget," says Paganini, "that I once placed myself in a position which was to form the turning point of my whole career. The Prince De * * * * * had long felt a desire to become the possessor of my excellent violin, which I still retain, and which was *then* the only one I had. He sent to me one day, in the endeavour to make me fix a price for it; but, reluctant to

part with my instrument, I declared that I would only do so for 250 gold Napoleons. The Prince remarked to me, shortly afterwards, that I was probably joking when I asked so much, but that he was disposed to go as far as 2000 francs. I was, that very day, in much embarrassment as to funds, owing to a considerable loss encountered at *play;* so that I was on the point of resolving to give up my violin for the sum offered, when a friend came in, with an invitation to join a party in the evening. My whole supply amounted to thirty francs; and I had already stripped myself of my watch, jewels, rings, pins, &c. I formed the instant resolve to hazard my last pittance, and then, if fortune were adverse, to sell the violin for what had been offered, and set off for Petersburgh, without either instrument or property, there to re-establish my circumstances. My thirty francs were presently reduced to *three*,—and I fancied myself already on the road towards the great city, when fortune, shifting like the glance of an eye, turned my petty remainder into a gain of 160 francs. That favorable moment rescued my fiddle, and set me on my feet. From that day, I renounced gaming, to which a portion of my youth had been sacrificed; and, in the conviction that a gambler is universally despised, I abandoned for ever that fatal passion."

The imperilled instrument above referred to, appears to have been the same that figures in the following anecdote, as related by M. Fétis. Whilst the youthful artist was still under the dominion of the passion for play, that sometimes robbed him, in a single evening, of the produce of more than one concert, and sometimes did not leave to him even his violin, he had recourse (at Leghorn) to the kindness of a French merchant, Monsieur Livron, a zealous musical amateur, who very

readily lent him a fine Guarnerius instrument. After the concert for which it had been required, Paganini took it back to the owner, who, however, declined to receive it, saying, "I shall take good care how I profane the strings that your fingers have touched! It is to *you* that my violin now belongs." The instrument was afterwards used by Paganini at all his concerts.

A similar incident occurred to him at Parma, though under different circumstances. Pasini, a painter, with musical propensities, had refused to credit the prodigious facility attributed to Paganini, in the way of playing the *crabbedest* music at sight, like one who had fully studied it. The sceptic therefore placed before him a manuscript concerto, in which all manner of difficulties had been brought together, and, handing to him an excellent Straduarius instrument, exclaimed, "This is *yours*, if you play that at sight, like a master." "In that case," observed Paganini, "you may say farewell to it at once;" and, in fact, his *fulminating* execution presently threw the convinced Pasini into an ecstacy of admiration.

To those earlier days belongs also the fact of Paganini's transient passion for the *guitar*, or rather for a certain fair Tuscan lady, who incited him to the study of that feebler instrument—of which she was herself a votary. Applying his acute powers to the extension of its resources, he soon made the guitar an object of astonishment to his fair friend; nor did he resume in earnest that peculiar symbol of his greatness, the violin, till after a lapse of nearly three years. Paganini tickling the guitar, may almost suggest, for analogy, Hercules dallying with the distaff!

After declining, for the freer indulgence of his rambles, various offers of profitable engagement on per-

manent grounds, he was induced to enter, in 1805, the service of Napoleon's sister with the exquisite name (Elisa Bacciocchi), then Princess of Lucca and Piombino, to whose elegant little court several distinguished artists were at that time attracted. Paganini became concertist and director of the orchestra there; and it was in this situation that he first attempted the execution of those triumphs of art under *diminished resources,* that have had, in the sequel, so large a share in the production of his success with the multitude. I allude to his acquired habit, displayed from time to time, of dispensing with the aid of *two* or even *three* of the strings of his instrument, and working apparent impossibilities with the remaining *two* or *one*—a habit which, owing to his occasional abuse of it, has laid him open to a charge of charlatanism, even from the Italians. His incredible address in these extraordinary efforts, produced a degree of astonishment which may probably have given rise to some of those rumours, both romantic and ludicrous, that have been so freely associated with his name. The explanation he has himself given of the origin of these performances, in the following letter to a friend, seems so consistent with his disposition at the period, that it may very readily command the preference in point of credibility :—

"At Lucca," he says, "I led the orchestra whenever the Reigning Family attended the opera. I was often sent for also to the court circle,—and once a fortnight I gave a grand concert,—but the Princess Eliza retired always before the conclusion, declaring that her nerves were too keenly affected by the sounds of my instrument. A certain lady, on the contrary, whom I had long adored in secret, was constant and assiduous in her attendance at these musical meetings.

I thought I could perceive that some secret influence attracted her towards me. Our mutual passion insensibly increased; but, as motives of prudence made secresy indispensable, and forbade any open declaration, the idea occurred to me of surprising her with a piece of musical gallantry, which would convey to her the expression of my feelings. Having announced my intention to produce a novelty at Court, under a title (that of "A Love Scene") well calculated to excite the general curiosity, I could observe that that feeling was not diminished on my entering the music-room, with a violin provided with only *two strings*, the first and the fourth. The *first* was intended to express the sentiments of a lady; the *fourth*, those of a despairing lover. Between the two, I established a sort of impassioned dialogue, in which the tenderest accents succeeded the violence of repeated fits of jealousy. Alternately plaintive and insinuating, there was at one moment a cry of grief or anger, and the next, of joyful reconciliation. The whole scene was eminently successful; the lady to whom it referred rewarded me by looks full of delighted amiability; and the princess Eliza, after loading me with praises, enquired if, after doing the impossible with *two* strings, *one* might not possibly suffice me. I instantly gave my promise to make the attempt; and, a few weeks afterwards, I produced a *Sonata on the fourth string*, which I entitled "Napoleon," and executed it on the 25th of August, before a brilliant and numerous Court. Its success having far surpassed my expectation, I may date from that period my predilection for the lower string; and, as my audience seemed never to tire of the pieces I had composed for it, I have at length arrived at that degree of facility which appears to have so much surprised you."

To find out sufficient scope for an entire field of melody, as the produce of a single musical string, must have demanded great study, as well as unremitting manual practice. Paganini extended the capability of the string to three octaves, including the harmonic sounds, which he developed into a most important resource. The success of this novelty was prodigiously increased, after he had presented it beyond the courtly circle, and made it public*.

When the Princess Eliza became Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Paganini followed her to Florence, where he became an object of even fanatic admiration. His talent developed itself daily in new forms; but he had as yet very imperfectly learned to regulate its exercise. The amount of study, however, to which he had subjected himself, after ceasing to be the slave of his father, is a thing to excite astonishment. He had abandoned himself, in solitude, to the research with which his mind was occupied; and had then formed the plan of the *Studies* which are known under his name, and wherein he proposed difficulties that he himself could not surmount without immense labour. It is a remarkable fact, also, that he suddenly interrupted his enquiries as to the possibility of augmenting the resources of the violin, in order to study seriously the works of Corelli, Vivaldi, Tartini, Pugnani and Viotti, and to ascertain the successive progress of his instrument. He afterwards familiarized himself with the works of the Violinists of France.

In the summer of 1808, after three years passed at Lucca, Paganini, with the consent of his patroness,

* It has been asserted that the *wire* of his fourth string was particularly fine and close, to ensure greater smoothness of surface, and facilitate the sliding of the fingers.

visited Leghorn, which city had been a scene of triumph to him seven years previously. How, at his first concert on this re-appearance, a cloud was converted into sunshine, has been pleasantly enough recorded by himself:—

"Having accidentally run a nail into my heel, I came on the stage *limping*—and the public greeted me with *a laugh*. At the moment when I was beginning my concerto, the tapers fell from my music-stand, drawing a fresh burst of laughter from the audience. Again, after the first few bars of the solo, my upper string broke—which raised the merriment to a climax: —but I went through the piece upon three strings—and the laughter was turned into shouts of enthusiasm."

Still retaining his engagement in the service of the Princess Bacciocchi, who was now become Grand Duchess of Tuscany, and established at Florence with her court, the great artist made professional excursions to various Italian cities—including one to Turin (where he was first attacked by the abdominal ailment which, in the sequel, so much enfeebled his health, and so often interrupted his travels, and disturbed the order of his concerts)—and another to Ferrara, where his grotesque mode of retaliation for an affront received in public, led to such a misunderstanding with the town's-people, as caused some jeopardy to his life.

About the commencement of 1813, his position at the Court of the Grand Duchess Eliza was suddenly and disagreeably abolished. On a certain state occasion, Paganini appeared in the orchestra in the full-blown uniform of a Captain of the *Gendarmerie Royale*, which, as a general privilege, his fair patroness had authorized him to wear. He was now requested, however, to exchange it immediately for a suit of plain black. The sudden shock to his dignity was met by a refusal to comply

with the order; and the result of this bearding of authority was his precipitate retreat from Florence, with (it is probable) a resolution to decline all future offers of a "fixed position."

In the city of Milan, where Paganini found many congenial attractions, he passed a considerable time, at various epochs of his life. There he first saw, and entered into friendship with, Rossini. There, too (in March 1816), occurred, within the walls of *La Scala*, his contest with Lafont, the champion of French renown in the fiddle field. The story has been variously represented. It appears that Lafont challenged Paganini to join him in a concert, and conceived great hopes of beating him, when, after acceptance of the proposal, the wary Italian was found to make a very indifferent exhibition of power at the previous rehearsal. When the rival display came on in earnest, however, the impression produced by Lafont, with his fine tone, and his graceful and elegant performance, was presently eclipsed *in toto* by the superlative mastery shewn in the performance of the Genoese enchanter, who purposely followed in the track of his competitor, to establish his superiority at all points—outweighing him in the deliberate *adagio*, and out-stripping him in all the agile feats of execution, besides transcending him wholly in the nicer *arcana* of the art. Of this purport, at least, is the more common and probable account of the affair. But, if the Frenchman was thus conspicuously beaten, it would seem that (as in the case of Falstaff) it would "discolor too much the complexion of his greatness" to acknowledge it: Monsieur Lafont wrote a letter of negation to a French journal, some fourteen years after the momentous day. In this letter he even decides himself to have obtained a partial advantage, alluding to some particular "phrase

de chant,"—and he indulges in this passage:—"On all occasions I have taken pleasure in rendering homage to his great talent; but I have never said that he was the *first violinist in the world:* I have not done such injustice to the celebrated men, Kreutzer, Rode, Baillot, and Habeneck; and I declare now, as I have always done, that the French school is the first in this world for the violin!"—To this self-and-country-vaunting epistle, as translated in the *Harmonicon,* Lafont found a respondent (April 7, 1830) in Signor Francesco Cianchettini, who asserts, as one present on the occasion, that the public decision was in favour of the Italian, and compares the vain glory of French fiddlers, in their talk of Paganini, to the empty freedom of the gladiators of of the Neronian age, in speaking of Hercules.

Paganini's own account of the affair exhibits a modest simplicity, tending to confirm any previous impressions of his having been the victor. After quoting it, however, Monsieur Fétis, who has repeatedly heard Lafont's relation of the circumstances, offers some remarks, which it is but right here to subjoin:—"It is not to be denied," says he, "that Lafont displayed much imprudence on that occasion. Doubtless he possessed qualities of a classic order, more pure, and more analogous to the French taste of his time, than those of Paganini. Doubtless he had greater volume and evenness of tone: but, with respect to original fancy, the poetry of playing, and the mastery over difficulties, he could place himself in no comparison with his antagonist. In a concert at the Paris *Conservatoire,* the palm, in 1816, would perhaps have been awarded to *him* (Lafont): but, in presence of an Italian audience, eager for novelty, originality, and impulsion, he must needs have succumbed."

To continue our narrative of Paganini's "life, behaviour and conversation,"—the French musical Amateur, Count de Stendhal (Monsieur Beyle) has alluded to him descriptively at two periods. In 1814, he observes, "Paganini, the Genoese, is, it appears to me, the first violinist in Italy. He cultivates an exceeding softness of expression. He plays concertos as unmeaning as those which set us gaping at Paris; but his delicate softness is always a distinction in his favour. I love especially to hear him execute variations on the fourth string of his instrument." And again, in 1817, he writes of him, as of a Genoese who played very finely on the violin—being "*equal to the French* in execution, and superior in fire and originality!"—Mathews, the author of the "Diary of an Invalid," offers the following remarks on him in the year 1818:—"He is a man of eccentric character and irregular habits. Though generally resident at Turin, he has no fixed engagement, but, as occasion may require, makes a trading voyage through the principal cities of Italy, and can always procure a theatre, upon the condition of equal participation in the receipts. Many stories are told of the means by which he has acquired his astonishing style; such as having been imprisoned ten years, with no other resource. His performance bears the stamp of the eccentricity of his character. His tone, and the thrilling intonation of his double stops, are electric. His bow moves as if it were part of himself, and endued with life and feeling."

In proof of the extensive sphere of his attraction, the following anecdote, having reference to the year 1824, has been published. A northern traveller, and passionate lover of music, M. Bergman, reading accidentally, the evening before, in the Journal, at Leghorn,

an announcement of Paganini's concert, instantly set out for Genoa, a distance of 100 miles, and luckily reached the spot just half an hour before the concert began! He came with his expectations raised to the utmost; but, to use his own expression, the reality was as far above his anticipations, as the heavens are above the earth. Nor could this enthusiastic amateur rest content with once hearing Paganini, but actually followed him to Milan, to hear him *de novo*. Of the two concerts which the great artist gave at *La Scala* at that time, the first consisted entirely (as far as regarded his own performance) of exhibitions on the fourth string! and may be said to form a remarkable antithesis to the case of the man so specially indicated by the late Charles Mathews, as having *lost* his G! The public were in ecstacies; but it was observed, with some regret, by the judicious among Paganini's auditors at these two concerts, that he was neglecting the *cantabile*, and the nobler powers of his instrument, for the difficult and astonishing. Yet it was to no want of sensibility in the soul of the artist, that this deviation was to be attributed; for he had before expressed his high admiration of Spohr, the German violinist, so celebrated for the excellence of his *cantabile*, and had given him full credit for being the greatest and most perfect *singer* upon his instrument—retaining, however, the satisfactory consciousness, as it has been supposed, of his own immeasurable superiority in the *aggregate* of the qualities for which all the greatest masters have been distinguished.

At Pavia, Paganini likewise gave two concerts, and was received with no less enthusiasm than at Milan. The bill which set forth the pieces to be performed was headed with the following autocratical annunciation:—

PAGANINI

Farà sentire il suo Violino!

(*"Paganini will cause his violin to be heard!"*)

In the bills of a concert he gave at Naples, in 1825, his name was announced with the style and title of *Filarmonico;* and various sage debates and conjectures were the consequence, among the idlers of the place.

But it is needless to go thrice over the map of Italy, and detail all the triumphs of our acoustic hero among his own countrymen. Let us shift the scene to Germany, and the time to the year 1828, when he was exhibiting before the people at Vienna, and exciting the admiration and astonishment of the most distinguished professors and connoisseurs of that critical city. His inducement to quit his native Italy had been furnished, it appears, by Prince Metternich, who had witnessed his performances in the preceding year at Rome, when the Pope (*soit dit en passant*) had conferred on our Artist the order of the Golden Spur, an honor which had formerly been awarded to Gluck and Mozart.

All notion of rivalling the foreigner was at once banished from among the Germans; and it is said that Mayseder, their violinist of then highest fame, with an ingeniousness that did him honor, intimated, in a letter to a London friend, that he felt he might now lock up his violin as soon as he liked!

The successes of Paganini gave new currency to the tales of crime and *diablerie* which inventive fame, "ficti pravique tenax," had so often circulated in connection with him. A captain of banditti—a Carbonaro—a dungeon-détenu—a deadly duellist—a four-mistress man—a friend of Beelzebub—a "bowl-and-dagger" administrator—*these* are some of the characters that were

freely assigned to him. Over the mouth of his aged mother, *in articulo mortis*, he was asserted to have placed a leathern tube, and to have caught her last breath at the S holes of his fiddle!—He was made out, in short, the very *beau idéal* of a fellow that might do the "First Murderer" in a Melodrama. These romantic rumours, however they might assist his success with the public, could not be passed by in silence. The injured, yet profited, object of them, made a public manifesto of his innocence in the leading Journals of Vienna, and appealed to the magistrates of the various States under whose protection he had lived, to say if he had ever offended against the laws. This was all very well; but, what was still better, enough of the pleasing delusion remained, in spite of all disavowals, to render Paganini the continued pet of the public. Indeed, a general intoxication with regard to him prevailed for some time with the Viennese public. Verses were daily poured forth in honour of him—medals were struck—and Fashion made profuse appropriation of his name to her various objects. Hats, gloves, gowns, stockings, were *à la Paganini:*—purveyors of refreshment fortified their dishes with his name; and if a brilliant stroke were achieved at billiards, it was likened unto a stroke of his bow! snuff-boxes and cigar-cases displayed his portrait—and his bust was carved upon the walking-stick of the man of mode.

Amid the glare of the enchanter's triumphs, it is pleasing to discover, in a record of a concert given for the benefit of the poor, that the cause of benevolence was not forgotten;—nor will it be uninteresting to bestow a moment's attention on the following little anecdote, which certainly reveals something not unlike a heart:—

One day, while walking in the streets of Vienna,

Paganini saw a poor boy playing upon his violin, and, on entering into conversation with him, found that he maintained his mother, and an accompaniment of little brothers and sisters, by what he picked up as an itinerant musician. Paganini immediately gave him all the money he had about him; and then, taking the boy's violin, commenced playing, and, when he had got together a crowd, pulled off his hat, and made a collection, which he gave to the poor boy, amid the acclamations of the multitude.

The following fact will give some idea of the hearty love of music, the real *dilettantism*, prevailing among the peasants of Germany. In the autumn of 1829, Paganini was summoned to perform before the Queen Dowager of Bavaria, at the Castle of Tegernsee, a magnificent residence of the Kings of Bavaria, situated on the banks of a lake. At the moment when the concert was about to begin, a great bustle was heard outside. The Queen, having enquired the cause, was told that about sixty of the neighbouring peasants, informed of the arrival of the famous Italian violinist, were come, in the hope of hearing some of his notes, and requested that the windows should be opened, in order that *they* also might enjoy his talent. The Queen went beyond their wishes, and, with truly royal good nature, gave orders that they should all be admitted into the saloon, where she had the pleasure of marking their discernment, evidenced by the judicious manner in which they applauded the most striking parts of the performance.

Prague, Dresden, Berlin and Warsaw were successively visited by the triumphant ear-charmer. Great was the excitement he produced at Berlin—but somewhat contradictory the opinions about him. "Most assuredly," said one journalist, "Paganini is a prodigy;

and all that the most celebrated violinists have executed heretofore is mere child's play, compared with the inconceivable difficulties which he has created, in order to be the first to surmount them." The same writer declared that Paganini executed an air, quite *sostenuto*, on one string, while, at the same time, a *tremolo* accompaniment upon the next was perfectly perceptible, as well as a very lively *pizzicato* upon the fourth string: that he executed runs of octaves on the single string of G with as much promptitude, precision and firmness, as other violinists on *two*. Nay, his celebrator went so far as to say that, in order to produce this latter effect, he employed one finger only; and further declared him able to render the four strings of the instrument available to such a degree, as to form concatenations of chords that could be heard together, and that produced as full and complete harmony as that of six fingers of a pianoforte-player on the key-board; adding, moreover, that, in moments of the most *daring vivacity*, every one of his notes had all the roundness and sonorousness of a bell! Another journalist averred that he was incapable of producing a *grand* tone, but that he executed the *adagio*, and impassioned *cantilenas*, with profound sensibility and great perfection of style. It was the remark of another critic, that "whoever had not heard Paganini, might consider that there existed a *lacuna* in the chain of his musical sensations."

Lipinski, a Pole, had ventured to seek, at Placentia, in 1818, a contest with Paganini, such as Lafont had previously sought. Whilst at Berlin, he met with a *third* challenge to a trial of skill. Sigismund Von Praun, an ambitious youth, asserting claims to universal genius —a counterfeit Crichton—attempted to dispute the palm with him, and paraded a public defiance in the papers:

but, this time, Apollo would not compete with Marsyas. Praun, who had made some impression, a few years before, at Malta and other places, appears to have had talents far from contemptible, although immature: but his presumption exposed him to merited ridicule:—

> Low sinks, where he would madly rise,
> This most pretentious imp!
> See! while with Paganin' he vies,
> *Praun* looketh *less* than *shrimp!*

After returning from Warsaw, Paganini visited Frankfort. It is related that, while he was in this latter city, an actor from the Breslau Theatre, taking advantage of his marked peculiarities of look, manner and gesture, made successful public mimicry of him; and that he had the good sense, himself, to attend one of these performances, and join in the general laugh with the best grace imaginable. He remained for a year at Frankfort; and it seemed as if he had renounced the previously well-circulated notion of his visiting Paris and London, when he suddenly made his appearance at Strasbourg, and soon afterwards arrived upon the banks of the Seine, to delight and astonish those idolators of novelty, the inhabitants of the French metropolis.

Of the impression produced by Paganini among the Parisians, as well as of his personal and musical characteristics, I find so graphic and picturesque an account in a French journal (*Le Globe*), that I am induced to translate, for my purpose, the chief portion of it, under the conviction that the length of passages leading to what is so far the *reverse* of "nothing" will be easily pardoned. Whether the writer's moral estimate of the spectacle-hunting branch of the Parisian public be not a little overcharged with severity, is a point which I have no pretensions to determine. That there is some

eloquence in the thoughts of the French writer, whoever he might be (and, alas! for common sense, he is, or was, a St. Simonian), will be, I think, admitted, even by those who would not so far admire his composition as to "mark it for a rapture nobly writ." Here follows his sketch, however; and Paganini himself (in pictorial effigy) shall attend, and give it a sort of personal confirmation.

"*The Artist* is about to make his appearance—silence begins to be restored—the overture is over, without having been listened to—somewhat less of coldness and unconcern is expressed on the faces around—and the hands of the white-gloved are all armed with the double opera-glass. *Enter Paganini and his Violin!*

"A universal clapping of hands attends his first advent on the scene. He advances, with sundry awkward and heavy steps; he makes obeisance, and the applause is renewed: he moves forward, with increased oddity of gait, and the noise of hands is prolonged on all sides.

" He makes several further salutations—he endeavours to animate his countenance with a smile of acknowledgment, which is instantly succeeded by a look of icy coldness..... He makes a halt, and, with still greater eccentricity of manner, it may be, than in his reverences and his walk, he seizes his fiddle, hugs it betwixt chin and chest, and fixes on it a look at once of pride, penetration and gentleness. Thus resteth he several seconds, leaving the public at leisure to examine and make him out in his strange originality—to note with curiosity his gaunt body, his lengthy arms and fingers, his dark hair descending to his shoulders, the sickness and suffering denoted in his whole frame, his sunken mouth, his long eagle nose, his wan and hollow cheeks, his large, fine, manifest forehead, such as Gall would have delighted to contemplate,—and, beneath the shelter and shadow of that front, eyes that dilate, sparkle and flash at every instant!

" Such doth Paganini show himself, formed, at every point of his person, to catch the greatest possible quantum of applause from a public whom it is his office to *amuse*. Behold him, a compound of chill irony and electric enthusiasm,—of haughtiness, with seeming humility,—of sickly languor, and fitful, nervous, fatal exultings,—of wild oddity, chastened by some hidden and unconscious grace—of frank abandonment, of charming attractiveness, of a superiority of talent that might fix the most indifferent,—but, above all this, a very *man-fiddle*—a being of extraordinary nature, created as if expressly for the gratification of a public delighting, before all things, in the extraordinary!

" ' Sufficient for the eyes!' seems he now to say within himself, as he notes in their operation the incoherent reveries and speculations of his beholders.

Promptly his looks descend from his violin to the orchestra—he gives the signal—he raises his right hand briskly into the air, and dashes his bow down upon the instrument!

"You anticipate the rupture of all its strings! On the contrary, the lightest, the finest, the most delicate of sounds comes forth to win your surprise. He continues for some moments to sport with your pre-conceptions, to look askance at you, to irritate you; and every whim that occurs to him, is employed to draw you out from your supposed indifference. He teases you, he pleases you: he springs, he runs, he wanders from tone to tone, from octave to octave; achieves, with incredible lightness and precision, the widest intervals; ascends and descends the chromatic and diatonic scales; touches harmonic accompaniments in his way; extracts unknown

sounds; searches, with easy success, for difficulties and tricks of skill; exhausts, within the space of a few bars, the whole range of chords and sounds possible upon the instrument—discourses, sings, bewails, ejaculates, describes! 'Tis suddenly a murmur of waves, a whistling in the air, a warbling of birds; a something undefinably musical, in the most acute as well as the lowest tones—an unrestricted impulse of caprices, and contrasts, without guide or measure! 'Tis, in a word, a perfect union of incoherence and nameless clatter, beyond which, the world-worn and vitiated beings around, the worshippers of singularity, can see nothing, imagine nothing, desire nothing!

"The great Artist has, nevertheless, resources other than those of phantasy, by which to captivate the public—and presently there succeeds to this musical phantasmagoria a broad, stately, harmonious (albeit somewhat too bare) simplicity. The fatigue of the public and of the Artist now gives place to a species of joy, that visibly blooms on every countenance. Chords that are pure sweet, melodious, brilliant, stream from beneath the bow; and then come accents of nature that seem to flow from the heart itself, and affect you with a perspiring thrill of delight; and then (prodigy of harmony!) the vague moans and unfinished plainings of a melancholy abandonment! You sympathize, in gentle pain, with the touching and melodious artist; you dispose yourself to follow, at his direction, the course of (as it should seem) some mournful, fleeting, intangible vision—when instantly a fit of violent distress, a sort of shuddering fury, seizes him, and we are startled, chilled, tormented, by cries which pierce the inmost recesses of our frame, and make us tremble for the hapless being whom we behold and hear! We dare not breathe—we are half

suffocated;—fearfully the head burns, and the heart aches.

"And yet—and yet, despite this too positive pain which the unfortunate artist has forced both upon us and himself, he bethinketh him mindfully that 'tis his vocation to serve for *sport* to the public that does him the *honor* to come and listen to him. He snatches away, therefore, your ladies with delicate nerves, and your men of effeminacy, from the suffocation and syncope that threaten them. Truce to the cries of agony! truce to despair! A fantastic chaunt, a wild laugh, springs up—and then succeeds a sort of buffoon dance, to complete the relief of these people, and restore them to *life*. *Encore* he sings, he laughs, he dances: each face is completely re-assured, and its owner, to prove to the rest, and to his own satisfaction, that he has not so far

forgotten himself as to quit the precincts of *bon ton* and eternal frigidity, smiles listlessly upon his neighbour, strokes his cravat adjustingly, and throws a careless glance from side to side! Amidst this returning indifference, let there come a new passage of arduous brilliancy, some more or less astonishing sleight of hand—and a reiterated clapping of palms convinces the unhappy purveyor of diversion that he has but too well served the public according to their taste!

"And now, should the rondo come, in its light and laughing gaiety—should the hymn of love and delight succeed, 'twill be the same case as with the cry of grief or despair. Each burst of simple gaiety must be followed by an air in the coquettish style, an impulse from the head, to give it stimulus. Amid the passionate harmonies of love, you shall hear interspersed the accents of coldness, of disdain, of raillery. After a voluptuous transport, you shall have mincings and caprices:—

for there is no gaiety, whether for *him*, or for the listening public, of a natural, fresh and youthful character; there is no frank and confiding attachment; there is no serene and grateful pleasure; there is no sadness that pours itself out for the sake of consolation; no joys but such as are like scentless flowers, that one picks to pieces in sport; no passion save what is akin to delirium, debauchery, or deadly poison! What the public must have, and the artist, are your *pizzicati*, your contrasts, your satanic schooleries, your touches of the extravagant;—'tis a dose of madness or despair,—'tis an agony —the sensation of a man suspended over a bottomless abyss;—'tis a violin, which is at once a flute, a bass, a guitar, and a whole orchestra, intermixed, confounded, and getting into harmony only by fits;—'tis a professional visage, revealing a wounded and withered heart; 'tis a human skeleton—death, in grotesque attire; 'tis the "talented exhibition" of a rebellious angel, who gnashes his teeth, and howls, and jeers! And so the public, seeing their artist hold forth to them, under convenient forms, all possible monstrosities, seem to applaud themselves inwardly, and to exclaim instinctively, 'Here is our interpreter, our plaything, and our own handy-work!'

"Of such a public, and such an artist, how saddening the sight!..... The public, made up of idlers—of beings isolated, selfish, cold, corrupt—must be *amused*, forsooth! and the artist exhausts his taste and his sentiment, and well nigh perspires blood and water, to comply with their exactions—to *amuse* them!—and if he attain this end, the public clap their hands, the manager of the theatre counts out to him a heap of gold, and he goes away, with his ears deafened at the noise which has surrounded him, and which, for a moment, (it may

be), has made his heart beat high ;—he goes away, with a loving grasp tightened over the coin he has so hardly won; and inwardly exclaims, with a smile of pity, 'The blockheads—the barbarians! Who is there among them that can comprehend me—that can *feel* my intentions?' —and then the home-returning public, selfish to the very soul, indemnify themselves for their fingers'-end applause, by sottish contempt, by remarks that are empty, or worse—that are scornful, bitter, shocking, disgusting even—such as those which may have been buzzed into one's ears in Italy or in Paris, but varied in a hundred ways, and aggravated at will, just as *he* varies and enlarges, twists and turns, beneath his magic bow, a subject of apparently the most simple and insignificant kind. And now the voices most distinguishable among the ebbing crowd murmur out the words, 'Gambler! Libertine!' or worse..... And the privileged public resort again to the theatre, to admire the talent of him whom they comprehend not; and the artist returns in like manner, to *amuse* those who provoke his pity, and whom he beholds so far below him! Thus, we have contempt on one side, compassion on the other—applause from hands chilled with the touch of gold, on the one part,—on the other, sounds that borrow their animation from no social sympathy! Such are the relations between the public and the professor—such the bonds that connect them!"

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So much for the pungently descriptive, as regards this singular being. It is less difficult, however, to exhibit effects and appearances, than to analyze the causes or means which produce them—and it is in this latter endeavour, accordingly, that there has been least success

attained by those who have made Paganini their theme, in Paris, as elsewhere. That which was already obscure in relation to him, has been forced into denser obscurity by the attempted demonstrations of certain pompous literary showmen, who have succeeded only in illustrating the proverb of "ignotum per ignotius." Mystification and generalization, the resources of ambitious ignorance, have been copiously employed in these endeavours. Of a less unsatisfactory character, however, are the pretensions of M. Guhr, the able violinist, of Frankfort, who has attempted an analysis of the means employed, and the effects produced, by Paganini. Like most professors of a secret, the arch Italian was always studious of maintaining the mystery so provocative of curiosity and admiration. He assumed the air cabalistic, and, with a severe front and sullen eye, would stimulate and foster the impression of his being "profited in strange concealments." M. Guhr, though he had the seeming advantage of personal and friendly access to him, found he could make nothing of him by the interrogatory system, and therefore adopted the alternative of becoming a silent student of his peculiarities, till he made certain discoveries of more or less importance, which he shaped into five heads, to show that Paganini's chief points of difference from other violinists were—

1. In his manner of tuning the instrument.

2. In a management of the *bow*, entirely peculiar to himself.

3. In his mode of using the left hand in the *passages chantans*, or passages of a singing character.

4. In the frequent employment of harmonic sounds.

5. In the art of putting the violin into double employ, so as to make it combine with its own usual office the simultaneous effects of a mandolin, harp, or other

instrument of the kind, whereby you seem to hear two different performers.

As to the first of these points, "his manner of tuning the instrument," observed M. Guhr, "is wholly original, and to me appears incomprehensible in many respects. Sometimes he tunes the first three strings half a tone *higher*, while that of G is a third *lower*, than ordinary. Sometimes he changes this with a single turn of the peg, and he invariably meets the due intonation, which remains sure and firm. Whoever is aware how much the higher strings stretch with the least relaxation of the G, and how much all the strings generally lose, by a sudden change in tuning, the faculty of remaining with certainty at one point, will join me in the lively desire that Paganini may decide on communicating his secret in this respect. It was surprising to find, especially on one occasion, when he played for nearly an hour and a half in the most opposite keys—without its being perceptible that he had changed his tuning—that none of the strings became disturbed. In an evening concert, between the *Andante* and the *Polacca*, his G string snapped, and that which he substituted, though afterwards tuned to B, remained firm as a rock. His manner of tuning his instrument contains the secret of many of his effects, of his succession of chords, and striking vibrations, which ordinarily appear impossible to the violinist."

According to this statement, "curious, if true," Paganini improved his effects by playing on an instrument *out of tune*, and, with something like a miracle of creative power, produced harmony out of discord. Paganini must of a surety have "pegged hard," and with a screwing that was inscrutable, to have attained such a management of his pegs! Was M. Guhr a misty demonstrator, or was

Paganini inexplicable? As to the G, that can bear to be pulled about in this fashion without resenting it, we must suppose it to possess a passive virtue, a habit of accommodation, quite beyond the custom of the stringy tribe,*

In expatiating on the *second* point, M. Guhr seems content to describe effects, rather than to labour (in vain) for the indication of a cause—but his description is not infelicitous :—

Paganini's management of the bow is chiefly remark-

* It is right to add here, that M. Guhr has subsequently reduced to a system the results of his investigation into the peculiarities of Paganini's playing, and, illustrating the whole with copious examples, has published it in a special work, of which an English version, under the title of "Paganini's Method of Playing the Violin," has been put forth by Messrs. Cocks and Co. The work is a curiosity in its kind, and lays open, perhaps, as many of the great Artist's labyrinthine recesses, as could well be traced upon paper, for the guidance of those who would toil in his track. Many of the difficulties thus exhibited to view, are truly astounding—difficulties that look as inexpugnable as the fortifications of Gibraltar! The *simultaneous four A's flat*, do "puzzle the will," while the *artificial double harmonics*, and other eagle-flights, cause an aching of "the mind's eye," in the attempt to follow them. Ordinary students, in beholding such things, may well experience a double shake of apprehension; but those of more energetic fibre, and devoted patience, should by no means despair of attaining, at least, a partial success in the undertaking.

Among the mechanical resources employed by Paganini, as essential for the production of his extraordinary effects, M. Guhr mentions the peculiar smallness or thinness of his strings—a quality the *reverse* of advantageous, as regards the *usual* course of playing,—and his frequent habit of screwing up his G string to B flat, through which device certain passages, otherwise unmanageable, were brought within the scope of possibility. Ordinary strings would resent this freedom of treatment by a *snap;* but those of Paganini were, it seems, expressly fitted and prepared for their *higher* duty, in a way which M. Guhr minutely explains.

able by the *tripping* movement which he imparts to it in certain passages. His *staccato* is no way similar to that ordinarily produced. He dashes his bow on the strings, and runs over a succession of scales with incredible rapidity, while the tones proceed from beneath his fingers, round as pearls. The *variety* of his strokes with the bow is wonderful. I had never before heard marked with so much precision, and without the slightest disturbance of the measure, the shortest unaccented notes, in the most hurried movements. And again, what force he imparts in prolonged sounds! With what depth, in the adagio, he exhales, as it were, the sighs of a lacerated heart!"

However he might sometimes err in his doctrine, M. Guhr was at least right in his faith. The supremacy which he assigned to the great Genoese genius, was expressed in the language of a handsome enthusiasm:—

"Rode, Kreutzer, Baillot, Spohr—those giants among violinists—seemed to have exhausted all the resources of the instrument. They had extended its mechanism, introduced the greatest imaginable variety in the use of the bow, which was made subservient to all the shades of expression and execution: they had succeeded, by the magic of their sounds, which rivalled the human voice, in painting all passions and all the movements of sentiment. In short, advancing rapidly in the path marked out by Corelli, Tartini, and Viotti, they had raised the violin to that rank which ensures to it the dominion of the human soul. In *their* style, they are, and remain, great and unsurpassed. But, when we hear Paganini, and compare him with the other masters, it must be confessed that he has passed all the barriers which custom had hitherto raised, and that he has opened a way peculiar to himself, and which essentially

separates him from those great Artists; so much so, that whoever hears him for the first time, is astonished and transported at hearing what is so completely new and unexpected;—astonished by the fiend-like power with which he rules over his instrument;—transported that, with a mechanical facility which no difficulty resists, he at the same time opens to the fancy a boundless space, gives to the violin the divinest breathings of the human voice, and deeply moves the inmost feelings of the soul."

But we have left Paganini himself at Paris, where we must now rejoin him and his fortunes. As for the latter, in the moneyed meaning, they grew with a ratio of increase that would have been more wonderful, had it not been afterwards outdone by that of his gains in London. As it was, they were sufficient to inspire one of the Parisian dilettanti, a nicer worker in figures, with a special access of passion for calculating the value of notes—that is to say, of Paganini's musical "notes of hand." The result, based upon a concert given at the Opera at Paris, producing 16,500 francs, and presenting 1365 bars of *the* fiddling, indicated a quotient of 12 francs for *each bar,* and was still more curiously distributed into proportions as follows:—for a semibreve, 12 francs; a minim, 6 francs; a crotchet, 3 francs; a quaver, 1 franc, 50 centimes; a semiquaver, 15 sous; a demisemiquaver, 7½ sous. This exemplary calculation did not overlook, moreover, the cash value of each of the occurring sorts of *rests;* besides working out a "contingent remainder" of 420 francs—that residue happening to be, by the most curious coincidence, exactly the price of such a violin as the Conservatory usually awards by way of prize to its most successful pupils.*

* When Paganini was afterwards in England, it was observed by a rigid time-keeper, who happened to attend one of his Concerts

The provoking impertinence of Rumour, with her thousand busy tongues darting conjecture and accusation, drew forth, at Paris, as at Vienna, some effort at self-defence on the part of the assailed Artist. His letter to the Editor of the *Révue Musicale* may claim a place here (in translated form), as well for its pleasantry and ingenuity, as for the clue it affords to the origin of some of the slanderous liberties which had and have been taken with his character. Of this letter, it subsequently appears that the materials were furnished by Paganini, and the diction arranged by his friend, M. Fétis :—

"Sir, *Paris*, 21 *April*, 1831.

"So many marks of kindness have been lavished on me by the Parisian public,—so many plaudits have been awarded to me,—that I am bound to give credit to that celebrity which is said to have preceded my arrival. But, if any doubt on the subject could have remained, it must have been dissipated by the care I see taken by your artists to make representations of my likeness,—by the numerous portraits of Paganini, more or less like the original, with which the walls of your capital are covered. It is not, however, to simple portraits, Sir, that their speculations are confined. While walking yesterday along the Boulevard des Italiens, I saw, in a print-shop, a lithograph representing *Paganini in prison*. "Well!" said I to myself, "here have we some worthy citizen who, in imitation of Don Bazilio, has been turning to account the calumny which has pursued me for the last fifteen years." While smilingly examining all the details of this mystification

(at Winchester), that his own portion of the performance, for which the requital was the sum of £200, occupied just twenty-eight minutes.

with which the fancy of the artist had furnished him, I perceived that a numerous circle had gathered around me, and that every one, as he compared my features with those of the young man represented in the lithograph, was taking pains to satisfy himself as to the degree in which I was altered since the period of my imprisonment! Thus I found that the thing was taken *au sérieux*, and that the speculation, at least, was no bad one. It occurred to me that, as every one *must live*, I might as well, of myself, furnish a few anecdotes to those enterprising persons who take so much interest in me and my affairs; so that, if so disposed, they may have a few more subjects for prints, as good, and quite as true, as that in question. It is with this view that I beg you, Sir, to do me the favour of inserting this letter in your Musical Review.

"These gentlemen have represented me *in prison*, but they do not seem to know what *took me there;* and, so far, they are about as wise as myself, or as those who have brought the story into circulation. It bears, in fact, a great many versions, and presents a corresponding variety for the designer. It has been said, for instance, that, having surprised a rival in the chamber of my mistress, I had bravely stabbed him from behind, when he was incapable of defending himself. By others, it has been pretended that it was against the person of my mistress herself, that my fury had been directed; but they are not agreed as to the *mode* I had adopted to accomplish her destruction,—some contending for the poniard, and others for poison; so that, as each has indulged his imagination in describing the affair, it would be hard to deny a similar license to the dealers in lithographs. I will relate what occurred to me at Padua some fifteen years ago.

"I had given a concert there, and had met with considerable success. On the following day, I was one of sixty at a *table d'hôte*, where I had entered the room without being recognized. One of the guests was pleased to express himself in very flattering terms on my public appearance the evening before. Another concurred in the praise thus bestowed, but added, by way of explanation, "There is nothing in the talent of Paganini which ought to excite surprise. He is indebted for it to the sojourn he has made for eight years of his life within the walls of a dungeon, with nothing but his violin to mitigate the rigors of his captivity. He was condemned to this long confinement for having basely assassinated a friend of *mine*, who was his rival."

"The whole company, as you may well believe, exclaimed against the enormity of the offence. For *my* part, I got up, and, addressing the person who seemed so well acquainted with my previous history, begged him to tell me where, when and how, the adventure had taken place. Every eye was turned towards me as I spoke, and you may judge of the general astonishment, when one amongst themselves was thus recognized as the chief actor in the tragedy. The historian was sadly embarrassed. It was no longer one of *his friends* who had fallen; "he had heard it said,"—"he had been credibly informed,"—"he had believed,—but it was possible that he might have been mistaken!"

"It is thus, Sir, that the reputation of an artist is trifled with, because others, of more indolent habits, are at a loss to understand how a man should apply himself as effectually to study, while at full liberty in his own house, as within the walls of a dungeon!

"At Vienna, a still more preposterous rumour put the credulity of the inhabitants to the test. I had been

playing those variations known by the name of *Le Stregghe* (the Witches). A young man, who was described to me as of a pale and melancholy aspect, with eyes of the most inspired cast, said that he saw nothing surprising in my performance, for, while I was executing my variations, he had distinctly perceived the devil at my elbow, guiding my fingers, and directing my bow; that the said devil was dressed in red; had horns and a tail; and that, moreover, the striking likeness of our countenances plainly established the relationship between us! It was impossible to refuse credence to so circumstantial and descriptive an account: and the curious became satisfied that this was the true secret of what are called my *tours de force*.

"For a long time, I was weak enough to allow my tranquillity to be disturbed by such idle rumours. I tasked myself to demonstrate their absurdity. I called attention to the fact, that, from the age of fourteen, I had been constantly under the public eye, and giving concerts; that I had been employed, for sixteen years, as chief of the orchestra and director of the music, to the Court; and that, if it were true that I had been eight years in prison for killing my mistress or my rival, it must have been before my first appearance in public; so that I must have had a mistress, and a rival, before I was seven years of age. I invoked even the testimony of my country's ambassador at Vienna, who declared that he had known me, for nearly twenty years, in the situation which became an honest man; and I thus succeeded, for the moment, in silencing the calumny; but calumny is never totally extinguished, and it does not surprise me to find it revive in this city.

"Under such circumstances, Sir, what ought I to do? I see nothing for it but to submit with resignation, and

give free scope to the exercise of an ingenious malignity. Before concluding, however, I may as well communicate an anecdote, which has probably given rise to some of these injurious rumours about me. It is as follows:

"A performer on the violin, named D . . . i,* who was at Milan in 1798, had connected himself with two men of bad character, who persuaded him to go with them during the night to a neighbouring village, to assassinate the clergyman, who was reported to have been possessed of great wealth. Happily, the heart of one of the associates failed him at the decisive moment, and he resolved to denounce his confederates. The gendarmerie went to the spot, and arrested D . . . i, and his friend, at the moment of their arrival at the house of the *curé*. They were condemned to twenty years' confinement, and thrown into prison; but General Menou, then Governor of Milan, at the end of the second year, set the artist at liberty.

"Would you believe it, Sir? It was on this foundation, that all my history has been raised. A performer on the violin was in question, and his name ended in *i*—so that it *must* have been *Paganini*. It was *I* who had been in prison, and the assassination became that of my mistress, or my rival. Thus, to explain the discovery of my new style of performance, they encumber me with fetters which would but add to the difficulty. Let me hope, Sir, that if I must yield to the propagators of a calumny so obstinately persevered in against all verisimilitude, they will at least consent to abandon their prey *after death*,—and that those who so cruelly avenge themselves of my success, will leave my ashes to rest in peace. Accept, Sir, the assurance, &c.

"PAGANINI."

* Duranowski, the Pole.

Largely profited in honours and revenue, through his exertions in France, the great artist directed his course to the shores of England, where the reception which awaited him was destined to form a climax to his previous triumphs. Fame, that most eager, but inexact lady-usher, who had introduced him to the French with so many whispers of wild import, took similar liberties when she presented him to the marvelling Londoners. "The page will be a strange one in the history of Art, to be written some fifty years hence (says a writer in the *Athenæum*), which shall contain all the rumours that heralded Paganini's first appearance in England, and were quoted in explanation of his outward eccentricities of person and manner. Our children will laugh at the credulity of their fathers, when they read of a magician who strung his instrument with the heart-strings of his mistress—a sort of demon Orpheus, who had been initiated into his power by the gentle ordeals of murder and solitary confinement;—and yet such reports were widely spread, and, strange to say, believed! The writer of this notice remembers having heard it gravely said in society, "that Paganini could play upon his violin when all its strings were taken off!" and, when another of the party, to expose the absurdity of the tale, declared that this wonder of the world had done more, having once actually *strung a gridiron* (his own violin not arriving in time), on which he performed a concerto with immense applause—this second and surpassing marvel (of course fabricated in the humour of the moment) was not only swallowed, but absolutely retailed, as an accredited fact!"

The capacious area of the King's Theatre, scarcely adequate to the large expectations founded upon his fame, was selected as the scene of his London début. An awkward collision with public opinion marked, how-

ever, the interval immediately preceding his appearance. An endeavour to elevate the prices of admission above the usual *concert-pitch*, raised a storm of opposition, that was only allayed by prompt and necessary concession. To attribute the attempt, thus properly frustrated, to an extortionate spirit on the part of Paganini, as was pretty generally done at the time, seems hardly fair. It is more reasonable to suppose that his ignorance of the English customs was taken advantage of, for the sordid purposes of others; and on this point it may be worth while here to say a few words. There is in London a class of needy and adventurous foreigners, who, with no available talent of their own, have just industry enough to make them beset those of their countrymen, whose genius or good fortune enables them to figure successfully in our metropolis. Whoever, at the period here referred to, has had occasion to direct his course through the Regent's Quadrant, either in the twilight of a departing day, or during the brighter reign of gas and night, must have noted the loose, idle, swaggering gait, the tawdry and *outré* habiliments, and the dark and dirty looks, of certain figures who loitered about in obstructive knots, or sauntered on in pairs or threes, among the more regulated passengers. Their equipment was ordinarily completed by a reeking cigar, which added to their sense of importance, and was an auxiliary to their impertinencies of demeanour towards the females, of whatever grade, who chanced to pass within their track. But their "high and *palmy* state" was in the gallery of the King's Theatre, where their pertinacious "manual exercise," and their laudatory vociferations, in favour of the dancers who successively occupied the stage during the ballet, were a serious annoyance to all around them. Under this character, which seems to have no English term

that will exactly fit it, they were (and still are) known as the *claqueurs*. Externally, they are altogether the personification of impudent pretence—and, to enable them to support their equivocal character, they seek out the private quarters of the great singer, or the fortunate artist, in whatever line, and, by all the arts of the meanest flattery, contrive to extract from his purse such tribute as his vanity, or his complaisance, may be willing to afford. It is no unnatural conjecture to suppose that, on the occasion just named, Paganini acted under a mistake produced by influence of this kind.*

Perhaps no achievement in the musical art, performed by one person, has ever been attended with more enthusiasm than marked the exhibition made by Paganini at his first concert in London, given on the 3rd of June, 1831. Certain it is that nothing in the way of musical performance, that had ever preceded it in this country, had exceeded it in *novelty*. It was the prevalent theme of talking wonder; and all the ingenuities of written criticism were tasked to describe and estimate it. Allowing for the difficulty of appreciating, where the singularity was so great, there was a remarkable acuteness shewn in some of the accounts that appeared in the journals of the day. From these I propose to make a few extracts, selecting such as seem best to illustrate the peculiarities with which they had to deal. Let us commence with a statement given in the first person, by Mr. Gardner, of Leicester.

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* M. Fétis, in his *Notice Biographique*, enters into a defence of Paganini in this matter—explains the advantages of the *contract* system, as liberating the artist from the petty cares that pertain to concert-giving—and clears Paganini from the imputation of sordid motives.

"At the hazard of my ribs, I placed myself at the Opera door, two hours and a half before the concert began; presently, the crowd of musicians and violinists filled the Colonnade to suffocation, all anxious to get the front seat, because they had to pay for their places, Paganini not giving a single ticket away. The Concert opened with Beethoven's Second Symphony, admirably performed by the Philharmonic band; after which Lablache sang *Largo al Factotum*, with much applause, and was encored. A breathless silence then ensued, and every eye was watching the action of this extraordinary violinist: and, as he glided from the side scenes to the front of the stage, an involuntary cheering burst from every part of the house, many rising from their seats to view the *spectre* during the thunder of this unprecedented cheering—his gaunt and extraordinary appearance being more like that of a devotee, about to suffer martyrdom, than one to delight you with his art. With the tip of his bow, he set off the orchestra, in a grand military movement, with a force and vivacity as surprising as it was new. At the termination of this introduction, he commenced with a soft streamy note of celestial quality: and, with three or four whips of his bow, elicited points of sound that mounted to the third heaven, and as bright as the stars. A scream of astonishment and delight burst from the audience at the novelty of this effect. Immediately, an execution followed, that was equally indescribable, in which were intermingled tones more than human, which seemed to be wrung from the deepest anguish of a broken heart. After this, the audience were enraptured by a lively strain, in which you heard, commingled with the tones of the instrument, those of the voice, with the *pizzicato* of the guitar, forming a compound of exquisite beauty. If it were

possible to aim at a description of his manner, we should say that you would take the violin to be a wild animal which he is endeavouring to quiet in his bosom, and which he occasionally, fiend-like, lashes with his bow; this he dashes upon the strings as you would whip with a walking switch; tearing from the creature the most horrid as well as delightful tones. He has long legs and arms, and his hands, in his playing, often assume the attitude of prayer, with the fingers pointed upwards. The highest notes (contrary to every thing we have learnt) are produced as the hand recedes from the bridge; overturning all our previous notions of the art. During these effects, a book caught fire upon one of the desks, which burned for some time unobserved by the musicians, who could neither see nor hear (though repeatedly called to by the audience) any thing but the feats of this wonderful performer. Some few pieces were played by the orchestra, that gave repose to the admiring audience. He then entered upon his celebrated performance of the single string, introducing the air of *Nel cor più (Hope told a flattering tale)*, to which he imparted a tone so 'plaintive and desolate that the heart was torn by it;' in the midst of this he was so *outré*—so comic—as to occasion the loudest bursts of laughter! This feat was uproariously encored. He then retired to put on three other strings, and ended this miraculous performance with the richest *arpeggios* and echoes, intermingled with new effects that no language can describe! Though he retired amidst a confusion of huzzas and bravos that completely drowned the full orchestra, yet he was called for to receive the homage of the audience. There was no trick in his playing; it was all fair, scientific execution, opening to us a new order of sounds, the highest of which ascended two octaves above C in alt."

Our next demonstration is from the able pen that gave life and eloquence to the new "Tatler:"—

"Those of our readers who have heard the most eminent of violin performers, eminent for strength, sweetness, and purity of tone, will hear all these requisites to absolute perfection in Paganini. They who have heard difficulties in the way of execution overcome, which it seemed bordering on desperation to attempt, may tax their faculties to invent new enormities, and they will not only fall short in their imaginings, but he will perform all, and more, not merely without show of effort, but as if they were a fanciful prelude, or pastime, to some laborious undertaking. In the course of the concert given last evening at the Opera-house, he performed four pieces, in which, we conceive, he exhibited every feature that the instrument can display, and many more than it has hitherto been thought capable of. The first was a concerto of the most florid character, varied with movements of exquisite expression and tenderness. The second was a composition in the minor key, and which, for its own intrinsic merit, made the strongest appeal to our feelings. In it he satisfied at once any doubt we might have that he would prove unequal in a *cantabile*.—His expression in this piece was the most genuine display of passionate feeling we ever remember to have heard on any instrument. It required no explanatory chorus, no voice of accompaniment—it was the perfection of musical sighing, and gentle sorrow. The third performance was a military rondo, the whole of which he played upon one string—the fourth. In it he introduced the subject of *'Non più andrai'* from *Figaro*, with variations of the most astonishing description. He introduced passages of imitation in octaves, with wonderful rapidity and neatness, and with a purity of tone that was delicious. The

precision, too, with which he dashed from the lowest note of the string to the opposite extreme, and all with the utmost indifference of manner, was one of the commonest of his achievements. The last piece, which was a brilliant rondo, he played entirely without the orchestral accompaniment; and this was the triumph of the evening. It consisted of an air with variations, crowded with enharmonic passages. The subject, now legato, and now hurried, was at one time attended with a florid, and at another with a *pizzicato* accompaniment; and, as he drew to a close, he accelerated his time to a *prestissimo, the air and the pizzicato moving on together*, and ending with a *rapid shake upon the latter!* The violin-player will fully appreciate the difficulty of this achievement. It is scarcely necessary to state that the audience were *satisfied*. The applause was showered upon him in torrents."

Another commentator thus expresses himself:—

"Paganini's playing is in a very high degree intellectual. It is mental, as well as physical and mechanical. The instant he seizes his violin, which he usually coquets with for a time before bringing it up to its proper place, a sudden animation passes over his countenance. He has the advantage, which all concerto players, by the way, ought to adopt, of *never using a book*. This mode, in itself, has as much the superiority as a speech delivered has over one that is read. When the first bow is drawn, Paganini is evidently lost to every other thought, and is revelling probably in a world of his own creation. All his passages seem free and unpremeditated, as if conceived on the instant. One has no impression of their having cost him either forethought or labour. The word difficulty has no place in his vocabulary, so completely is all brought under his subjection and mastery.

" Nothing can be more intense in feeling than his conception and delivery of an adagio passage. His tone is not, perhaps, so full and round as that of some other players—as Baillot, or De Beriot, for example: it is delicate, rather than strong; but that delicacy is inconceivable, unless one has heard it, and was probably never possessed equally by any other player. His touch is occasionally so fine, that the note seems to float in the air, and not to spring from any instrument. In point of expression, it is impossible to imagine any thing more perfect. The melancholy or tender (as should be the case in slow movements) mostly predominates; but there is no shade or form of expression which the genius of Paganini does not draw forth. His adagios are intermixed with passages of rapid execution, which go off with the rapidity of a rocket, or a falling star—a break of the subject, or an impertinence, in any hands but his own—but, if analyzed, all is in perfect keeping.

" The only thing that can be said to lessen the wonder of Paganini's powers in the way of mere mechanism, is that he is indebted for them, in some measure, to his own peculiar conformation. His long arms, and slender frame, allow him to place the instrument in the most advantageous position that is possible; and his left arm is brought so completely under it, that his hand seems to cover the whole extent of the finger-board. Such is the flexibility, besides, of his joints, that he can throw his thumb nearly back upon his wrist, and extend his little finger, at the same time, in the opposite direction. By these means, when in the first position, as it is called, of the violin, he can reach, without shifting, to the second octave. His extreme high notes—for he contrives to play three octaves on each string—are given, consequently, with a precision and certainty never heard

before. This flexibility, without doubt, is indispensable to the execution of many of the passages, though it is, probably, not wholly natural to him, but acquired, in part, by his long and severe practice. His solo on the fourth or G string (the other three being discarded for the occasion) we consider among the most charming, as well as the most wonderful, specimens. There are few players, we apprehend, who, in point of mere difficulty, could do on four strings what Paganini does on one; but that is nothing. The charm lies in the peculiar effect—in the soft and silvery tone of that string, which one almost imagines to be increased, though, perhaps, without reason, by taking the others away. No defect is felt, as regards compass, in this piece. There appear to be as many notes as in the violin in its ordinary state; and, in fact, by the aid of the harmonics, he does make nearly as many."

Such were the wonders achieved, and such the impressions created, by this superlative master of the most versatile of instruments. After he had performed at this his first concert, Mori went about with the jesting enquiry, "Who'll buy a fiddle and bow for eighteenpence?" and John Cramer exclaimed, "Thank Heaven, I am not a violin-player!" It seemed, in short, to be commonly admitted, that, as nothing had been heard before, in violin performance, equal to this exhibition, so nothing could be expected ever to exceed it—that "the force of fiddling could no further go." One of the numerous critics whom he kindled into rapture, observed that in the style of Paganini were united the majesty of Rode, the vigour of Baillot, the sentiment of Spohr, the *sensibilité* of Keisewetter, the suavity of Vaccari, the mastery of Maurer, the *justesse* of Lafont, and the elegant expression of De Beriot!

The excitement produced by the first public display of these powers in our metropolis was fully sustained on the subsequent occasions. It would fill a volume of itself, were I to treat, "avec circonstance," of the successive concerts at theatres and other places, in which the Genoese genius electrified attending mortals

"With heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds."

With no intention to be thus particular, I must beg permission, nevertheless, to extract a few more passages of contemporary notice. The celebrated *Capriccio*, in which he introduced the air from the *Carnaval de Venise*, merits a separate description :—

"On reaching his position in the centre of the stage, he seemed at once to lose all consciousness of the presence of mortals, and to live and breathe for his violin alone. He touched its strings lightly and trippingly, as if to awaken it, and then, after having given it three or four of those sweeping, switching strokes, which almost justify the expression that he thinks to lash it into submission to his spirit, he threw off a most singular mutilation of the Venetian Air, "Oh! come to me!" in which, while he appeared to retain only the sad part of the original, he communicated to it an odd wailing character. On this subject he *capriccio'd* some four or five variations, all in a consistent style, in which he introduced most of his peculiar movements of hand and bow. At the end, he was rapturously applauded, and he retired as he had entered. The applause, however, being continued, mixed with some cries of *encore*, he came forth again, but without his violin, and, making a most eloquent bow, retired once more. The plaudits were, however, now redoubled, and the wicked audience, having got the crotchet into their heads, pretty unanimously vociferated *encore;* when, after some delay, the

good Signor absolutely did make his appearance with his second self—or his *pickaninney*—his violin; and did vouchsafe two little variations more, of the wizard strain:—the last was altogether performed by the hand which held the instrument, and without the aid of the bow. On the whole, so strange, so whimsical an outpouring of melancholy we never heard before, and probably never shall again:—one really did not know whether to laugh or cry at it. Nothing upon record, that we know of, comes near it, with the exception of *Corporal Trim's* pathos in the kitchen."

In the region of the harmonic notes, which was before (comparatively speaking) almost a "terra incognita," Paganini may claim the undoubted merit of having made extensive discoveries:—

"The *staccato* runs, performed with the bow and concluded with a guitar note, are quite original with Paganini; and this is one of the few novelties in which he may find successful imitators. But his manner of producing the harmonic notes, which ascend to a height never before imagined, will probably remain a perpetual mystery*; it is not their least marvellous characteristic that, exquisitely attenuated as they are, the distinctness and strength of the sound is not, in the smallest degree, impaired. In performing on the fourth string only, he introduces the harmonics as part of the regular scale, thus obviating, in effect, all deficiency as to compass. The introduction of *pizzicato* runs, on this solitary string, is another inexplicable mechanical feat."

And again, as to these wonder-working harmonics:—

"Signor Paganini having, through vast exertion, procured himself the aid of two entire additional octaves

* *Some* enlightenment on this point may be derived from a scrutiny of M. Guhr's Work, already referred to.

with their half-notes, making in all 28 notes *on the fourth string*, by means of the harmonics, is able to execute pieces of a very extensive scale on that string alone. The labour he must have gone through, before he could so completely obtain the command of the harmonic notes, none but violin performers of experience can form a notion of. The most surprising part of the use he makes of them is in the clearness and strength of their tone, which render them as audible as the full notes, at any distance."

At his (so called) farewell Concert at the King's Theatre, on the 20th of August, two of the pieces he selected for his display were especially remarkable in the treatment. One of them, a *fandango* of very bizarre character, performed on the fourth string, consisted, in part, of a sort of whiningly amorous colloquy between two birds. An incidental *crowing*, like that of a cock, was privately conjectured, by one of the musical men present, to be the artist's medium of conveying an oblique satire upon *the audience*, as the subdued vassals of his will. No impression of the kind, however, existed with *them*, for they demanded the repetition of the affair. The other piece was our National Anthem of God save the King, certainly an ill-selected subject for exhibition on a single instrument, and, in the treatment of it (if I may venture to advance my own impressions experienced at the time), too full of sliding, and, as it were, *puling*, to satisfy the pre-conceptions derived from the fullness, steadiness and grandeur, characteristic of the original composition. Indeed, as it appeared to my own humble judgment, there was intermixed in the general performances of this wonderful artist, "something too much" of this sliding and tremulous work, the result, seemingly, of an overstraining at expression—of an

attempt, if I may so speak, to make the note carry more than it could *bear*. The effect, in such cases, was in some degree analogous to that of Velluti's singing; it bespoke intentions outstripping the possibility of execution. But then, amid so much splendid achievement, must we not always expect to find some mark or other of the imperfection belonging to that poor human nature which is the agent?

Whatever may have been, in the *artistic* sense, the relative appreciation of Paganini's talent, in the various European countries that had witnessed its display—it is certain that he was no where so highly estimated, according to the *monetary* scale, as in England, where it has been supposed (though the exact computation of such matters is difficult) that his receipts amounted to about twenty-four thousand pounds. Whilst the golden shower was descending on him, he was not so absorbed in its fascination, as to forget the silent claims of the penny-less;—nor would it be fair to measure his impulses in this direction, by the side of that largeness of soul which we have all so greatly delighted to honour in the excellent Jenny Lind.

In the summer of 1834, after an absence of six years, spent partly in Europe and partly in America, Paganini revisited Italy—where, looking wistfully towards the sweets of retirement, he invested a portion of his accumulated funds in the purchase of an agreeable country-residence in the environs of Parma, called the *Villa Gajona*. Among the projects he at that time entertained, was the thought of preparing his various compositions for publication—a measure towards which the eager curiosity, of those especially interested in the violin, had long been pointedly turned, under the impression that all which was mysterious in the production

of his extraordinary effects would thus be freely elucidated. Exaggerated notions, however, as to the pecuniary value of such a work, seem to have possessed the mind of Paganini; for, an enterprising Parisian publisher, who had made hopeful approaches to him whilst in London, had been frightened away by the discovery, that if he were to enter on the speculation by payment of the sum expected, he must look through a vista of ten years, for the commencement of his profits!

Received every where with honour in his own country, as the result of his foreign ovations, and decorated, by Maria Louisa, Duchess of Parma, with the Imperial Order of St. George, the caressed Artist was, nevertheless, incapable of any continuous enjoyment, for the want of that health which his restless and transitive spirit had no where been able to attain. A speculation of no sound character, with which he was induced to connect himself (in ignorance, as it is believed, of its real nature), drew him away to Paris, in 1838, and, in the result, damaged his pocket, and did not wholly spare his reputation. In that project, designed professedly for concerts, but covertly for gambling, he became involved, through a legal verdict, to the extent of 50,000 francs.

In the midst of the troubles associated with that affair, his ailments had deepened into consumption; and he made a painful journey through France, under medical prescription, to reach Marseilles. There, in retirement, beneath the roof of a friend, a brief return of energy enabled him to take up, now and then, his violin or his guitar; and he one day showed so much animation as to join effectively in a certain quartett of Beethoven's, which he passionately admired. The necessity for change, so peculiarly felt by consumptive patients, impelled

him again to his own Genoa; but the *great* change was at hand—and another journey brought him to his last earthly scene, which was at Nice. The closing process was rapid. His voice became hardly distinguishable from silence itself—and sharp attacks of cough, that grew daily more obstinate, completed the exhaustion of his strength.

Of the final moments of this memorable man, an Italian writer has furnished some account, in terms which, touching as they are, yet leave in the heart a sense of something to be desired—something which no reflecting mind will be at any loss to understand. The account is (in English) as follows:—

"During the evening that was his last, he manifested more tranquillity than was habitual to him. On awaking, after a short slumber, he had the curtains of his bed drawn aside, that he might contemplate the full moon, serenely marching through the immensity of the clear heaven. In the midst of that contemplation, he again sank into drowsiness; but the whispering of the contiguous trees excited in his bosom that stir of gentle emotion, which is the very life of the beautiful. As if he would have rendered back to Nature the sweet sensations he was receiving from her in that final hour—he extended his hand toward his charm-haunted violin—toward the faithful companion of his wanderings—toward the magic thing that had been as an opiate to his troubles;—and then—he sent up to heaven, along with its expiring sounds, the last sigh of a life that had been all melody!"

The date of the event was the 27th May, 1840—and the age of the deceased, fifty-six. The great Artist left considerable wealth, together with the title of Baron (conferred on him in Germany) to his only son,

Achilles, the offspring of a union with a certain vocalist, named Antonia Bianchi—a union which, not having been secured and sanctioned by the church's testimony, was soon severed by the lady's temper.

The life of Paganini had been a "fitful fever"—and the desire to "sleep well" may indeed be conceived to have been as an abiding thirst within him. Even his cold remains, however, were not permitted, by jealous and jaundiced authority, to repose undisturbed. Slander had been furtively busy with his name—he had died without the *stamp* conferred by official religious ministrations—his Catholicity was dubious—his mortal relics could not (*so* decided the Bishop of Nice) be committed to consecrated ground. In vain did his son, his friends, and the chief professors of art in that city, make solicitation of leave for a solemn service to be performed in behalf of his eternal repose, under the plea that, like many another victim of consumption, he had not supposed his death to be imminent, and had departed this life suddenly;—the leave was refused; and all that could be obtained, was the offer of an authentic declaration of demise, with license to transport the corpse whithersoever it might be wished. This was declined—and the affair was brought before a public tribunal, which gave verdict in favour of the Bishop. Appeal was then had to Rome, where the Bishop's decision was cancelled, and the Archbishop of Turin was charged, conjointly with two Canons of the Cathedral at Genoa, to make enquiry into Paganini's Catholicity. During all this time, the corpse had remained in a room at the Hospital at Nice. It was then transferred, by sea, from the lazaretto of Villa Franca, near that city, to a country-seat in the neighbourhood of Genoa. There, a report soon got into circulation, of strange and la-

mentable sounds being heard by night. To arrest these popular impressions, the young Baron Paganini undertook the cost of a solemn service to the memory of his father, which was celebrated in one of the churches at Parma. After this expenditure, the friends of the deceased had permission from the Bishop of Parma to bring the corpse within that Duchy—to transfer it to the *Villa Gajona*—and to inter it near the village church:—and this funeral homage was at length rendered to the remains of the man of celebrity, in May 1845, but without any display, in conformity with orders from the government.

The sum bequeathed by Paganini to his son (for whom a documentary legitimacy had been procured) amounted to two millions of francs (about £80,000), charged with legacies of fifty, and sixty thousand francs, respectively, to his two sisters, and with an annual *pittance* of 1200 francs to the mother of his loved Achilles. He left also some valuable instruments, including an incomparable *Straduarius*, a charming *Guarnerius*, of the small pattern, an excellent *Amati*, a *bass* of Straduarius, agreeing with the violin by the same maker, and his large and favourite *Guarnerius*. This latter, the sole instrument associated entirely with his travels, he bequeathed to the city of Genoa, being unwilling that any other artist should possess it after him.

Some further particulars, to illustrate chiefly the habits of the *man*, may not be deemed superfluous.

Paganini's existence was a series of alternations betwixt excitement and exhaustion; and it is not surprising to find that his moods of mind were variable and uneven, and that he would sometimes sit, for hours together, in a sealed and sombre taciturnity, whilst, at

other times, he would surrender himself to a wild effervescence of gaiety,—without any apparent motive in either case. Most commonly silentious, he was talkative when travelling. The weak state of his health made him averse from loud conversation ; and yet, when the rattle of the wheels over the pavement became deafening, he would talk loud and fast. To the scenic charms out-spread before his eyes, he was insensible—his urgent impulse being to move rapidly, and to reach his journey's end. In his later years, a low bodily temperature was habitual to him, insomuch that he would wrap a furred pelisse around him, in summer-time, and huddle himself up in a corner of his carriage, with every window closed. In-doors, on the contrary, he would have all the windows open, and called it taking an air-bath ! He anathematized the climates of Germany and France, but, above all, that of England ; and declared that Italy was the only country to live in. The intensity of his internal sufferings transmuted, at times, his ordinary pallor into a livid, or even a greenish hue ; but his recourse was to quackery—to *one* empirical remedy, in which he had faith, and not to doctors, in whom he had none. Before commencing a day's journey, he took no tea, nor coffee, but either soup or a cup of chocolate. If it were early in the morning, he would start without taking anything, and sometimes continue fasting the greater part of the day. For the encumbrances of baggage, he had almost the contempt of a *Napier*. A small shabby box, in which he placed his beloved *Guarnerius* instrument, his jewels, money, and meagre stock of linen,—a carpet bag—and a hat-box—these were his accompaniments, and were all stowed inside the vehicle. Careless of all that goes by the name of *comfortable*, he was also very little solicitous about his toilet. His

wardrobe might have gone into a napkin. As for his papers, they were thrust into a small red portfolio, in "most admired disorder," such as himself alone could penetrate for any immediate purpose. Arithmetician he was *not*, in the ordinary sense—but he managed his business calculations in a way of his own, that answered all his need. To the style of his accommodations on the road, he was quite indifferent, provided only that his rooms were *quiet*. At the day's end, a light supper, or (sometimes) a cup of camomile tea, sufficed him.

In his own quarters, Paganini maintained usually the strictest solitude, and seemed always to quit his room with regret. His violin, as silent as himself, was not touched, save when he tuned it for a concert, or a rehearsal. He had worked *enough*—his labours had long before carried him to the summit;—his want, his craving want, was *repose*. There is a floating story about his having been dodged and watched for six months, from one halting-place to another, by an enthusiastic English amateur, who hoped to "pluck out the heart of his mystery," to grasp the secret of his studies, by lodging at the same hotels, and occupying (whenever possible), a contiguous chamber. Vain expectation! a profound silence always enveloped the great Professor. At length, however, the crisis of discovery seemed imminent. Paganini was seen (through a key-hole) to seat himself on a couch—to take the incomparable fiddle from its case—to raise it to his left shoulder! Still, the silence was unbroken—not the whisper of a note could be distinguished! Paganini, absorbed doubtless in the composition of some new piece, only shifted his left hand about, upon the neck of the instrument, to study his positions, without the help of the bow—and then restored the un-awakened fiddle to its resting-place. The

Englishman (says the story) renounced his hapless pursuit, and returned home in despair!

Enchained to music and its toils, from his earliest youth, Paganini had acquired very little general knowledge. Books were strange things to him—and history and science, almost nullities. Political events had no interest for him: he looked at the newspapers merely for what personally concerned him. His mind was much engaged with his own projects for the future—such as forming a Musical Conservatory in Italy, publishing his compositions, writing operas, and ceasing to travel. He had a *Byronic* mistrust of friends, and proneness to regard them as secret plotters against his peace. As for visitors (by whom he was sometimes besieged), as many as he was not constrained to see, were passed over to his Secretary. To those Artists who sought his converse, that they might enucleate his professional secrets, he listened patiently—but maintained his reserve. Invitations to dine or sup, which at every large town came in a shower upon him, were sparingly and reluctantly accepted. On rising from the table, if he could escape unperceived, he would immediately retire, to take repose. He was more lively *before* than *after* dinner—an ill compliment, perhaps, to his *host*, but no bad way of signifying the real sacrifice he had made, in accepting his invitation. In evening society, he was cheerful, in the absence of *music;* but, if that were started, either in practice, or as a conversational topic, his good humour instantly vanished;—nor is this at all wonderful, when we remember that his public life was one enormous compound of music, and that to *forget* that art, when in his more private moments, must have been to him as a want and a refuge. His eyes, weakened by the glare of stage lamps, had an

owl-like propensity to shun the light, as was manifest in his custom of turning his back to the chandeliers &c. in evening society, and sitting in total darkness at home. He had a faculty, like that of George the Third, for unfailing recollection of the persons and names of those who had been once presented to him; and yet (strange to say) the names of the towns, wherein he gave his concerts, would slip from his memory, as soon as he had quitted them.

On the mornings of his concert-days, he allowed himself a liberal time for quiet—lounging at ease upon a sofa, as if conscious that composure is the cradle of strength—and then he would start up, full of decision for business. Amid the ensuing preparations, he took a good deal of snuff—the sure sign of his being earnestly engaged. At rehearsal, he was careful to exclude strangers. If they found their way in, however, he touched his solo passages almost inaudibly, or indicated them by a slight *pizzicato*. With the orchestra, he was rigorous in the extreme—exacting the minutest attention to every point. When he came to some special passage of display, in expectation of which, the members of the band were on their legs, all eagerness to catch what was coming, he would sometimes carelessly throw off a few notes only, and then turn towards them with a smile, and the words, *Et cætera, Messieurs*.' It was for the evening—for the public—that he reserved all the wonders of his talent. He always took away with him the various orchestral *parts*, which he would entrust to no one else. As for the *principal* part, it was never seen, as he played from *memory*, and sought to prevent the copying of his compositions. He had a way—the caprice of conscious power—of keeping the public a long time waiting, before he would show him-

self, and begin to play. His departure from a concert-room was the picture of a triumph. The curious and the enthusiastic formed a dense lane, extending to his carriage, and welcomed him with transports of admiration. At his hotel, a similar assemblage awaited him with their acclamations. Elate with such marks of general favour, he would then join the *table-d'hôte*, not without an appetite for supper, though, perhaps, depression and indigestion might constitute the experience of the following day.

Such, then, as artist and as man, was Nicholas Paganini—whom let none *envy*, nor deem that a world-wide fame was *well* acquired by the sacrifices *he* made for its attainment—sacrifices involving, almost of necessity, much oblivion of the higher purposes of life, along with the forfeiture of some of its best comforts. Measuring the toils and sufferings of his career against its triumphs, surely we may say, "*le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle!*"—the precious flame of life was *too dearly* expended on a perfection that allowed *nothing else* to be perfected!" For a fitting wreath to the memory of Paganini, the *cypress* should bear equal part with the *laurel;* since pity and admiration can hardly be dissevered, in our thoughts of him. The consummation of *the artist* was the spoiling of *the man*. To render himself, in so absolute a sense, the *master* of his instrument, it was essential to become, what he emphatically was— its *slave*. Bodily health, and moral vigour, withered alike under a dedication to *one* object of ambitious study, so early sighed for, and with such prolonged severity pursued. That the *success*, however, (be its relative worth what it may) was *complete*—that the bold and wild adventurer reached the highest attainable summit in those regions of art that he explored and illustrated—is a point which seems hardly capable of

rational dispute. Allowing some of his eccentricities to weigh against him as *defects*, there will yet remain sufficient ground for regarding him, on the whole, as the greatest of *all* violinists, past or present; nor would *he* be the *most* hardy of prognosticators, who should venture to assign him the like pre-eminence over all future individuals of his calling;—for how can we anticipate another such happy union of the *inventive* with the *executive* power—another case in which there shall be so strange a concurrence in the various requisites of predisposing organization*, inflexible will, and co-operating circumstance? The same causes, however, which have placed him so far above the level of the crowd of instrumentalists, would seem to deny to him the production of any permanent or important impression on the general state of his Art. He could hardly have been followed by others, even if he had undertaken to be their teacher, and to "ungird his strangeness" to their toiling apprehensions, disclosing to them the most subtle principles of what he himself delighted to call *la filosofia del violino*. *His* means would still have been above *their*

* Dr. Bennati read, before the *Royal Academy of Sciences*, at Paris, a physiological notice of this extraordinary man, in which he gave it as *his* opinion, that his prodigious talent was mainly to be attributed to the peculiar conformation which enabled him to bring his elbows close together, and place them one over the other, to the elevation of his left shoulder, which was an inch higher than the right; to the slackening of the ligaments of the wrist, and the mobility of his phalanges, which he could move in a lateral direction at pleasure. Dr. Bennati also alluded to the excessive development of the cerebellum, as connected with the extraordinary acuteness of his organs of hearing, which enabled him to hear conversations carried on in a low tone, at considerable distance.—M. Geoffroy St. Hilaire remarked that he had been particularly struck with the prominence of the artist's forehead, which hung over his deeply-seated eyes like a pent-house.

means, and the end would never be reached. Thus, although the greatest of artists, he must be reckoned, as a director and propagator of his art, far less considerable than Viotti of the modern school, Corelli of the old, or even others less distinguished than these two men of fame. "In considering the discoveries of Paganini," said once an able French critic, "as regards their application to the progress of the art, and of genuine music, I think that their influence will be very limited, and that what arises out of them is only good in *his* hands; for, indifferently executed, it would be insupportable. The art of Paganini stands alone: it was born and it will die with him." It is true that we have had *subsequent* experience, in various instances, of a certain degree of *approximation* to the feats of Paganini; but, were this even closer than it is, it would not invalidate what has been here suggested as to the almost incommunicable nature of such skill as his.

Potent to stir the vibratory string,
And *wonders* from the realms of sound to bring!
Skilled, through the *ear*, to reach the awakened *heart*,
Or bid the *Fancy* play her picturing part!
Conqu'ror, whose captives, gladdened with soft strains,
Clung to thy sway, and revelled in their chains,
And came in crowds, their homage to renew,
And heaped the tribute still, as still thy due!
How *void* the space that thou were wont to fill!
Thy throne, how vacant, now—and *mute* thy skill!
Hast thou—hast *found*, far, far from earthly din,
The *rest* thy glittering triumphs could not win?
—Farewell!—What chief soe'er may seek to reign,
Thy like we shall not look upon again!

The *compositions* of Paganini, replete as they are with the most surprising difficulties, and the boldest in-

novations, form prominent examples of what may be called the *romance* of instrumental music. The design entertained by their author, of giving them to the world in his own life-time, as well as of imparting the *secret* that should make their execution seem no longer superhuman, was destined to have no fulfilment; and it is to be regretted that his death rendered impossible the complete publication of *all* that he had composed, as not a few of the manuscript pieces were left by him in an imperfect state. Of *twenty-four* several pieces, enumerated as forming the whole of the MS. original works of Paganini, preserved by his son, *nine* only were discovered to be in a completed state. An edition of all that is presentable, however, has been undertaken in Paris, to gratify at length a twenty-years expectation; but it is very doubtful whether a London edition will be ventured on, since it is only for the higher class of professors—for a very select minority—that such a collection can have any attractiveness, beyond that of mere curiosity.

Monsieur Fétis, in his literary notice, written to accompany the Collection just referred to, has given some able critical remarks on the compositions in detail. His pamphlet may be consulted with advantage by the enquiring reader. Alluding to the compositions in their general character, M. Fétis observes that great merit is displayed in them—novelty as to the ideas, elegance as to the forms, richness of harmony, and variety in the effects of instrumentation. These qualities (he adds) shine out particularly in the *Concertos*, however much they may differ from the classic type of those of Viotti, which, with all their charming sentiment, left something yet to be desired, on the score of *variety*, in the more rapid passages.

In his own compositions (which he always played

with more satisfaction to himself than those of any other master) the mind of the great artist was highly developed; but to execute his peculiar intentions, in all their complexity, he needed the beautiful, exemplary, unfailing accuracy of intonation, that so distinguished him. How nicely exact, in the softest passages, his double-notes! With what marvellous certainty did his bow pitch down upon the strings, no matter what the relative distance of the intervals! His hand (says M. Fétis) was a geometrical *compass*, that divided, with mathematical exactness, the neck of the violin—and his fingers always came plump upon the very point at which the intonations of his double-note intervals were to be obtained.

As some sort of antidote to positive *despair*, I will conclude this chapter with a passage in which, despite their thorny intricacies, the above-named writer recommends the practical study of Paganini's Works:—

"It will perhaps be asked, what can be the advantage of introducing fresh difficulties into Art? In Music, it will be reasonably contended, the object is not to *astonish*, by the conquest of difficulties, but to *charm*, by means of sentiment. Against this principle, I would be the last to declaim; but I would observe, first, that there is no preventing those cases of *exception*, in which certain artists *will* seek the triumphs of their talent in extreme perils of execution, which, if successful, the public will as surely applaud;—and, secondly, that the study of what is most arduous, leads to certainty in what is more simple. A violinist who should attain the power of playing the Concertos of Paganini, with truth of tune, and in perfect proportion, would possess, *à fortiori*, an undeviating accuracy in ordinary music."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRENCH SCHOOL.

. . . . . furnished out with *arts*. DRYDEN.

NEXT in importance to the Italian School of Violinists, that of France now offers its claims to our notice. If the palm, indeed, were to be awarded according to the comparative merits of the *living* (or recently living) Masters of each School, it must be given in favour of France; for, though we might admit the Italian Paganini to have been "facile princeps," the greatest of *all* performers —and though we might overlook the consideration of his belonging, in fact, to no class or acknowledged system whatever—he is, still, but *one* man of might,—a Goliah, without an army to back him, since his qualified countrymen, in modern days, are few—whereas the French have a redoubtable band of champions, present or recent, whose united force is able to defy living competition. It is in the aggregate of the *past* with the present, however, that the Italians are found to predominate. The probable originators of the art of violin-playing (in so far, at all events, as it was worthy to be called such), *they* have been likewise its steady and decisive improvers in every department, from the days of Corelli to those of Viotti, a space of about a century;—while

the excellence of the French is of more modern growth, and, it should be remarked, of more limited character. Brilliancy of style, neatness and finish of execution, are *their* distinguishing traits. They are a gay and a polished nation—they are gay and polished fiddlers. They animate you in the *vivace*, they dazzle you in the *allegro brillante*—but they commonly fail to reach your heart through the *adagio appassionato*. Their violinists have all the skill that is independent of deep feeling. In *expression*, they fall short of what is required: they catch its lesser graces, but they seem rarely to attain its higher powers. The violin, considered more particularly as the *fiddle*, is an instrument too congenial to the temperament of the French, to have escaped their especial notice and close cultivation. To all that is mercurial in their tendencies, as well as to much that is artificial in their habits, it lends itself with the utmost readiness: it is the best instrument to dance to; it is the best instrument to protect from *ennui* your sitters at a theatre: it sharpens the pungency of an *air de vaudeville;* it sets off the ceremonial of a ballet. In this sense, the French have "marked it for their own," and achieved wonders with it. Out of this sphere—this lower empire—their power has been less considerable. It must be confessed, however, that this limitation applies with greater force and distinctness to the time *preceding* their great Revolution, than to later days. That mighty event, which stirred up the depths of the national mind, and opened the channels of thought in every direction, could not but exert some degree of influence, even on those arts that have least connection with the ordinary business of men. The French taste in music—formalistic, ungenial, and anti-catholic as it was—has undergone *some* change for the better, through the convul-

sions that have overthrown Kings, and scattered Courts. It still retains, albeit, much of its old, hard idiosyncrasy. French music is still, for the most part, "*caviare* to the general." It lacks cosmopolitan character. To ensure it a full and hearty welcome, it needs a French education. If these observations be just, it follows that our lively neighbours, in dealing with stringed instruments, as well as with others, would not attain first-rate success in the way of *composition* for them—and such has been (I submit) the fact. Their real *forte* lies in *exposition*—in giving outward manifestation and effect to the ideas of others.

It is the remark of one of their own countrymen (the able Mons. Choron), that the principal merit of the French School of Music, taken altogether, lies in the various branches of *execution*. And, with reference always to this quality, execution, he adds, "the style in which the French have real and undisputed merit, and indeed, in many respects, have a marked superiority, is the instrumental in general, and especially that of the violin. On this point, the French have always had great pretensions, and *often* founded in justice." After alluding to the alleged excellence of early French violinists, and, in particular, of the twenty-four *petits violons* of Louis XIV, formed by Lully, M. Choron has the candour to acknowledge that he knows not how to reconcile this with the following statement, given by Corette (a furious partisan, by the way, of the French School of Music), in the Preface to his Méthode d'Accompagnement, published at Paris about 1750.—"At the commencement of this century," says that author, "music was very dull and slow, &c. .... When Corelli's Sonatas were first brought from Rome (about 1715), nobody in Paris could play them. The Duke of Orleans,

then Regent, being a great amateur of music, and wishing to hear them, was obliged to have them *sung* by three voices. The violinists then began to study them, and, at the expiration of *some years*, *three* were found who could play them. Baptiste, one of these, went to Rome to study them under Corelli himself."—Having quoted this embarrassing passage, M. Choron thus continues:—" Be this as it may; since that period, instrumental music has been studied with ardour by the French, and they have made astonishing progress in it. France has now an excellent school for the violin, *founded upon that of Italy*."

The excellence of the school, thus defined as to its peculiar character, and thus denoted as to its origin, none will probably be disposed to deny, who are conversant with the general state of instrumental performance at the present time. Adverting again to the question of *composition*, we may assert, and that also on M. Choron's authority, that the French have only been imitators, although they are not without names of some celebrity there likewise. M. Castil-Blaze*, in a passage wherein he takes a rapid glance at a few of the French violinists, presents us with a tolerable notion of the characteristics of the French system, both as to playing and writing:—" Kreutzer excels in voluble touches, whether continuous or detached into pointed notes. Rode is distinguished by traits of *coquettish* character, as well as by a free vocal effect conveyed by full notes, whose whole charm is in the quality of the tone. Lafont exhibits an admirable shake, with much grace and refinement in his style. Baillot dazzles in rapid passages, and surprises by the boldness of his

* " *De l'Opéra en France.*"

double-stringed effects, and the magic of his bow." Here we find, albeit expressed in the most favorable terms, far more of the pretty and the glittering, than of the solid or the elevated.

"Each of these masters," continues M. Castil-Blaze, "has lavished upon his compositions those peculiar traits which he most affected, and has made sparing use of such as were remote from his own style of execution. It is certain that those favorite traits would not come beneath his hand, in equal proportion, in a composition of Viotti's; nay, he would there meet with some that would not admit of his displaying all the extent of his resources, &c. It is therefore indispensable that the virtuoso, who desires to show himself in the most favorable light, should compose his own music, or, at least, should direct him who is charged with its composition." —This, it needs scarcely to be observed, may be well enough calculated to favor the triumphs of individual vanity, by giving prominence to mechanical dexterity; but it is obviously not founded on a regard for the higher principles of art.

Having glanced at the great national Revolution, as to its agency in modifying French musical taste, let us give a momentary attention, likewise, to another influential agency—that of the *Conservatoire de Musique* —an institution which has done much, during the last half century, to foster and develop merit in the Art under consideration. M. Castil-Blaze, in his work, "De l'Opéra en France," thus notifies its origin and effects:—

"In 1793, a union took place of all which France possessed that was most illustrious in the line of composers, singers, and instrumentalists. The *Conservatoire* of France, that monument of our musical glory, was raised on the foundation of the old *Ecole de Chant.*

All the scattered documents, the varying and sometimes contradictory theories, the principles professed by each master, were brought together, examined, revised;—and then was formed a universal code of music, a system of instruction clear in its elements, methodical as well as rapid in its progression, and certain in its results. * * * * * * * * Then, and only then, were heard in France the sublime productions of Haydn and Mozart, which came forth with all the charms of novelty, though our predecessors had been essaying them for twenty years before."

It may be here incidentally mentioned, that, in 1802, there sprang up so violent a dissention among the professors at the above valuable Institution, as to excite some fears about the continuation of its existence. Subjoined is an epigram that was born of that occasion:—

"J'admire leurs talents, et même leur génie,
Mais, au fait, ils ont un grand tort;
C'est de s'intituler professeurs d'harmonie,
Et de n'être jamais d'accord."

Or, as we might phrase it in our own tongue:—

The force, the skill, for which they're fam'd,
I praise;—yet one great fault I see:
Of *harmony* Professors nam'd,
How comes it that they *can't agree?*

Let us now proceed to consider the principal French violinists in their order—commencing with Lully, who, though not a Frenchman, but rather (as Burney styles him) a Frenchified Tuscan, belonged entirely to France, both by his education, and the results of it. It has been already observed that Baltazarini, the Italian (who became, *Gallicè*, Monsieur de Beaujoyeux, and who flourished about eighty years earlier than Lully), was the

first who introduced the violin to Court favour and fashion in France; where, however, till the time of Lully, it appears to have had no higher province than that which it enjoyed in association with the dance and the ballet—a condition which may, perhaps, be termed "frivolous and vexatious," but which must be allowed to have coincided pretty exactly with the national taste, at the time.

Jean Baptiste de Lully was born of obscure parents at Florence, in 1633 or 34. The bias towards music which he shewed, while yet a child, induced a worthy Cordelier, from no other consideration than the hope of his some time becoming eminent in the art, to undertake his tuition on the guitar—an instrument which, in the sequel, he was always fond of singing to. The Chevalier de Guise, a French gentleman, who had been travelling, brought Lully into France, in 1646, *as a present to his sister*, according to Dr. Burney's phrase and statement, or, in the more qualified language of another account, to serve as a page to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, a niece of Louis XIV, who had commissioned the Chevalier to find her out some pretty little Italian boy for this latter purpose. If such were the lady's instructions, the *countenance* of the youth did not answer to them; but his vivacity and ready wit, in addition to his skill on the guitar, determined the Chevalier, as it appears, to engage him. On his arrival and presentation to the lady, he found her so dissatisfied with his looks, as to induce a change in her intentions—and, instead of her page, he was made to fill the office of her under-scullion!

Neither the disappointment he experienced, however, nor the employment to which he was destined, affected the spirits of Lully. In the moments of his leisure from

the kitchen, he used to scrape upon a wretched fiddle, which he had contrived to procure. That fiddle it was which caused him to emerge from his obscurity! A person employed about the Court, happening one day to hear him, informed the Princess that the youth had an excellent taste for music. She directed that a master should be employed to teach him the violin; and, in the course of a few months, he became so great a proficient, that he was elevated to the rank of Court Musician. In consequence of an unlucky accident, he was dismissed from this situation; he afterwards, however, found means to get admitted into the King's *band of violins*, and applied himself so closely to the study of music, that, in a little time, he began to compose. Some of his airs having been noticed by the King, Louis XIV, the author was sent for, and his performance of them was thought so excellent, that a new band was formed, called "*Les petits Violons*," and he was placed at the head of it. Under his direction, they soon surpassed the famous band of twenty-four, which had previously enjoyed an extent of reputation attributable rather to the low state of musical taste and knowledge among the French, at that period, than to the skill of the performers; for they were incompetent (according to De la Borde) to play any thing they had not made a special study of, and gotten by heart. This was about the year 1660, at which time the favorite diversion of the French Court was a species of *ballet*, that consisted of dancing, intermixed with dramatic action, and musical recitative. The agency of Lully's musical talent in these entertainments soon procured him the favor of *le Grand Monarque*, who liked music in so far as it conduced to dancing, and had a taste which found its satisfaction in airs *de rigueur*, containing a stated number of bars,

accented with the utmost reference to saltatory convenience*.

In the soul of Louis, vanity supplied the place of musical ardour, and led him to consider the establishment of an Opera necessary to the splendour of his Court. Lully became, after that event, the great dramatic musician of France. Of his importance in that relation, however, and of his fortunate league with the lyrical genius of Quinault, &c. it is not within my purpose to treat. Possessing, now, the situation of Composer and joint Director to the French Opera, he relinquished the connection with his former Band, and instituted one of his own. On becoming appointed superintendent of the King's private music, he neglected almost entirely the practice of the violin; yet, whenever he could be prevailed on to play, his excellence astonished all who heard him. The Maréchal de Grammont had a valet named Lalande, who afterwards attained some distinction as a violin-player. One day, after dinner, the Maréchal desired Lully to hear Lalande, and to bestow on him a few directions. Lalande accordingly played; but Lully, whenever he did not please him, snatched the instrument out of his hand, made use of it himself preceptively, and, at length, became warmed into such excitement, through the train of ideas pro-

* Of harmony, or of fine melody, or of the higher relations between poetry and music, the ostentatious Louis appears to have had no conception. In a case of rivalry, wherein Battista, a scholar of Corelli's, played against one of the French band who was an ordinary performer, he (the royal Auditor) preferred an air in "Cadmus" (an opera of Lulli's, and not one of his best), as given by the Frenchman, to a solo (probably of Corelli's) by the Italian,—saying, "Voila mon gout, à moi; Voila mon gout!"

duced by his own playing, that he did not lay down the violin for three hours*.

In the year 1686, the King was seized with an indisposition that threatened his life; and on his recovering from it, Lully was required to compose a *Te Deum*, in grateful celebration of the deliverance. Accordingly he wrote one, which was not more remarkable for its excellence, than for the unhappy accident with which its performance was attended. Nothing had been neglected in the preparations for the execution of it, and, the more to demonstrate his zeal, Lully himself beat the time. With the cane that he used for this purpose, in the heat of action (from the difficulty of keeping the band together), he struck his foot; this caused a blister to arise, which increasing, his physician advised him immediately to have a toe taken off, and, after a delay of some days, his foot, and at length the whole limb. At this dreadful juncture, an empiric offered to perform a cure without amputation. Two thousand pistoles were promised him, if he should accomplish it; but all his efforts were in vain. Lully died on the 22nd of March, 1687, and was interred at Paris, where an elegant monument was erected to his memory.

A strange story is extant, in relation to the closing scene of Lully's life. His confessor prescribed to him, as the condition of his absolution, that he should commit to the flames his latest opera. Lully, after many excuses, at length acquiesced, and, pointing to a drawer in which the rough draught of *Achille et Polixène* was deposited, it was taken out and burnt, and the confessor

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* "Jamais homme n'à porté si haut l'art de jouer du violon: et cet instrument était plus agréable entre ses mains qu'aucun autre de ceux qui plaisent le plus."—*Moreri, Dict. Historique.*

went away satisfied. Lully grew better, and was thought out of danger, when one of the young Princes came to visit him. "What, Baptiste," says he to him, "have you thrown your *opera* into the fire? You were a fool for thus giving credit to a gloomy Jansenist, and burning good music."—"Hush, hush!" answered Lully, in a whisper, "I knew well what I was about—I have another copy of it!" Unhappily, this ill-timed pleasantry was followed by a relapse; and the prospect of inevitable death threw him into such pangs of remorse, that he submitted to be laid on a heap of ashes, with a cord round his neck; and, in this situation, he expressed a deep sense of his late transgression. On being replaced in his bed, he became more composed, and (as the relation goes) he expired singing, to one of his own airs, the emphatic words, "Il faut mourir, pécheur, il faut mourir!"

The high estimation which the once *sous-marmiton*, and afterwards regenerator of the music of France, had enjoyed, enabled him to amass considerable money. In natural disposition, he was gay and cheerful; and, although he was rather thick and short in person, somewhat rude in speech, and little able to shape his manners to the formal refinements of the French Court, he was not without a certain dignity, which intellect succeeds in conferring.

The musical style of Lully was characterized by vivacity and originality; by virtue of which qualities, his compositions, chiefly operas, and other dramatic entertainments, kept possession of the French stage till the middle of the last century, when Rameau came into vogue. Lully is considered to have invented the *overture*, or at least to have given to it its most distinctive marks of character. He composed *symphonies for*

violins, in three parts; but these are not to be met with in print.

If we may judge of the old French violin-players, *en masse*, from the kind of business assigned to them by Lully, in his operas, we must draw a very moderate conclusion as to their proficiency; or, to borrow the words of Dr. Burney, we must regard them as "musicians not likely, by their abilities, to continue the miraculous powers ascribed to Orpheus and Amphion." Even for half a century after Lully's time, the French progress on the instrument appears to have been far from considerable. Their performers had as yet borrowed but little of the true spirit of their great Italian originals; nor do we come to any very important name among them until that of

Jean Marie le Clair (or Lecler), who was born at Lyons, in 1697. This artist may, perhaps, be regarded as presenting, in his performance and his compositions, a distinct commencement of the French Violin-school, as divaricating from that of Italy. His father was a musician, and, from his instructions, aided by assistance from other masters (and from Somis, in particular), he became an excellent performer. He went abroad for several years, to reap improvement from the professors and performances in other countries; after which, on an invitation from the Duke de Grammont, who had been his pupil, he went to Paris, and was allowed a handsome pension from him. By the recommendation of this nobleman, Le Clair obtained the situation of symphonist to Louis the Fifteenth, in which he laboured incessantly to improve the practice of the violin among his countrymen. With this view, he composed, and published in the year 1723, a collection of *solos for the violin;* and soon afterwards another of the same kind, in both of

which he has displayed much knowledge of the instrument, combined with the resources of a well-regulated fancy. Besides these two Collections of Solos, Le Clair was the author of *Six Sonatas for two violins and a bass;* two books of *Duos*, two of *Trios*, two of *Concertos*, and two under the title of *Recreations*.

The character and conduct of Le Clair were of a nature to attract the attention and esteem of all who knew him. He lived, for the most part, a retired and contemplative life; yet, he at last fell a sacrifice, as it has been supposed, to envy. He was assassinated whilst walking alone in the streets of Paris, in the evening of the 22nd of October, 1764.

Le Clair was celebrated for the spirit and energy of his performance; and his compositions afford, in some measure, a proof of his powers. At least, it may be said, that, for boldness and dignity of style, there are no instrumental compositions by any of the older French authors, not excepting those of Lully, which can be compared with them. It is true that they are difficult of execution, and this, for some time, was an obstacle to their currency. The modern school, which laughs at any impediments in the way of execution, would do ample justice of hand to his hardest passages, were it *now* the fashion to present them to the public ear.

Jean Baptiste Senaillé, who may also be considered as having had some share in the foundation of the French Violin School, was a contemporary of the artist just recorded; and drew his first breath in Paris. His early lessons were received from Queversin, one of the four-and-twenty who formed the King's band of violinists. His next instructor was Baptiste Anet; but the completion of his studies took place in Italy, whither he was attracted by the high celebrity of the artists there.

He returned to Paris in 1719, with a well-earned reputation, and subsequently formed some good pupils, among whom were Guignon, and (probably) Guillemain.

Jean Pierre Guignon was born, in 1702, at Turin, probably of French parents, and became further Gallicized by going early into France, where he had a long career of distinction. He brought to the exercise of his art a liberality conducive to its diffusion and repute, as well as redounding to his own honor—for he gave gratuitous lessons to many young violinists whom the "res angusta domi" might else have left to struggle on without encouragement. His talents gave further aid to the *fidicinal* cause by the valuable compositions which they enabled him to devote to it, consisting of Sonatas, Duetts, Trios and Concertos. Guignon had the support of courtly patronage, and gave instructions to the Dauphin, father of Louis XVI. During thirty years, he held an appointment rather suggestive of mock-heroic associations, than either flattering or useful—that of *Roi des Violons, et Maître des Ménestriers*, an office which, as already stated in these recording pages, had given rise to our English dignity, more ridiculed than respected, of *King of the Fiddlers*. Guignon died at Versailles in 1774.

Gabriel Guillemain, born at Paris, in 1705, produced some sonatas for the instrument that have been held in considerable estimation, and was also admired as a performer. In the decline of his life, he lost his faculties, and, in that melancholy state, became his own destroyer (in 1770), inflicting on his person no less than fourteen wounds.

Pierre Gaviniès, a native of Bordeaux, claims some distinction, both as composer and as performer. So great was his aptitude for the latter character, that

he made his *début* at the *Concert Spirituel* in Paris, when he had attained but fourteen years of age; nor were his pretensions those of mere vulgar precocity, that makes a dash at music, as parrots do at language; for he gained the approbation of the best of all judges, Viotti. The estimation in which the talents of Gaviniès were held, procured for him, in 1794, the honour of being appointed Professor of the Violin at the then newly formed institution, the Paris *Conservatoire*. His works consist of three collections (or operas) of Sonatas, several Concertos, and a series of violin music entitled *Les vingt-quatre Matinées*, the pieces in which are, for the most part, very difficult. He died in 1799, at the advanced aged of 73.

François Joseph Gossec, a composer of some eminence, though not expressly for the violin, fixed his residence at Paris in 1751, and was soon afterwards attached to the suite of the Prince de Condé, as leader of his band. In 1770, he founded the Concert of Amateurs, which enjoyed a marked success during ten seasons, and had the accomplished but volatile Chevalier de St. George for its "premier violon." Gossec subsequently filled an important post at the *Conservatoire*, and was, in other respects, actively connected with the progress of music in France. He died "full of days." The symphonies of this master, and the Quartetts of Davaux, which preceded, in France, those of Haydn, are cited as advantageous specimens of French instrumental music of the concerted kind; and some of them are still heard with pleasure.

Pagin, who drew his excellence from that best fountain, the Italian school, was born in France, in the year 1730. Addicting himself early to the violin, and prompted by the desire to form his style on the purest

model, he travelled into Italy, expressly to receive instructions from Tartini. His happy disposition for the art was turned to speedy advantage by that master, and Pagin had scarcely reached his twentieth year ere he returned to Paris, where the success that attended him, in various performances at the *Concert Spirituel*, attested the value of the means which he had taken for his proficiency. His enthusiasm, however, in relation to his great preceptor, occasioned a check to his career. He chose to play, exclusively, the music of Tartini; and the French musicians, resenting his choice, set about to oppose him. Their jealousy, whether alarmed for national or for individual credit, took an ingenious method of working out its purpose: it was by the ironical applauses and sinister compliments which he received, at one of the above concerts, that the unwelcome innovator was compelled to forego appearing at any more of them. He was subsequently engaged in the suite of the Count de Clermont. Dr. Burney, who heard him in 1770, has recorded his admiration of the expression and lightness that distinguished his performance.

Pierre Lahoussaye, another venerator and follower of Tartini, commenced his date of life at Paris, in 1735. At a still earlier age than Pagin, he gave public manifestation of his talent. He first found his infant way upon the instrument, unaided, and then, after some tuition from the solo-player, Piffet (styled *le grand nez*), made his *début* at the *Concert Spirituel*, when only nine years old. Shortly afterwards, the little Lahoussaye had the fortunate opportunity of hearing, at a musical party where he was introduced, the greatest violinists of the time, including especially—Pugnani, Giardini, Pagin, Gaviniès, Vanmalder, Domenico Ferrari, &c. A solo was played by each of these men of mark:

and the eager astonishment with which the "tender juvenal" listened to their successive outpourings of expression, or feats of dexterity, could not but attract the attention of all. On Ferrari's putting a violin into the boy's hand, he not only made some brilliant preludings, but repeated from memory several passages in a sonata of Tartini's that Pagin had just before played. An enthusiast himself, Pagin was so delighted with the boy, that he at once undertook his further instruction, and prevailed on the Count de Clermont to assign to him a post as his chamber-musician. Thus advantageously placed, the young Lahoussaye was, however, restless till he could accomplish his favorite wish—that of *seeing Tartini*. Under this impulse, he attached himself to the suite of the Prince of Monaco, and went with him to Italy. Repairing with all speed to Padua, he found the wondrous master in the church, in the act of commencing a concerto. To express the surprise and admiration of the young Frenchman, at the purity of tone, spirit and accuracy of execution, truth and delicacy of expression, that triumphed in the performance of the Italian, would be difficult indeed. He felt at once so humbled as to the sense of his own powers, as almost to abandon the hazardous wish for an introduction to him whom he had so eagerly sought out. Creditable as was this diffidence to the character of the aspirant, the kind disposition of Tartini rendered it unnecessary. He received him favourably, was gratified to observe in his performance something of the manner of his own school, and engaged to advance him in it. Lahoussaye was reluctantly drawn away to Parma, through his situation with the Prince of Monaco: but, after delighting the court there by his talent, he found means to return to Tartini at Padua, and continued for a long

time under his tuition, remaining in Italy, altogether, for the space of fifteen years. In 1769, he visited London; and, after passing three years there, returned to his native Paris, to diffuse, according to his means, and as far as the musical habit of his countrymen might admit it, the benefits of the Italian style. He arrived at the situation of *Chef d'Orchestre* to the *Concert Spirituel*, and to the Italian Opera in Paris. In 1789, he had the honor to succeed Mestrino as *Chef-d'Orchestre* of the Theatre of Monsieur; and he afterwards filled the same post at the Feydeau Theatre. On the establishment of the Paris *Conservatoire*, he was appointed Professor of the First Class. The compositions of Lahoussaye are numerous, and have had some celebrity, although, for the most part, they have remained in the manuscript state.

Paisible (pupil of Gaviniès) whose gentle name contrasts painfully with his violent end, was born in 1745, at Paris, and was one of those able artists who contributed to give éclat to the *Concert Spirituel*. Full of youthful hope derived from the impression he had there created, he made a musical "progress" through a part of France, the Netherlands, Germany, and as far as St. Petersburg. Here, however, the tide of his success was suddenly turned. His desire to exhibit his talents before the Russian Empress was baffled, owing, as it has been supposed, to the intrigues of Antonio Lolli, who was then in the service of the Imperial Court. Failing also in his endeavour to obtain notice by means of public concerts, Paisible engaged in the service of a Russian Count, with whom he went to Moscow. This resource did not last long; and the concerts he attempted at Moscow were even more discouraged than those at St. Petersburgh. Distracted by misfortune and debt,

he closed his career in 1781, by the act of his own hand—having written a touching letter of farewell to his friends, in which he desired them to sell his violin (a valuable one), with the object of defraying the claims against him.

Simon Leduc, another distinguished pupil of Gaviniès, and one of the directors of the *Concert Spirituel*, was born in 1748. Two books of Solos, and several Concertos and Symphonies, are his works as a composer. There is extant, in connection with his name, a little anecdote of some interest. About a month after his decease, in 1777, there was a rehearsal of one of his symphonies for the *Concert des Amateurs*. In the middle of the adagio, the Chevalier de St. George, who had been his friend, and was then leading the orchestra, was so affected by the expression of the movement, combined with his recollection of the composer, that he let fall his bow, and burst into tears!

F. Hippolite Barthélémon, a fine performer of the old school, was born at Bordeaux, in 1741. In the early part of his life, he served awhile as a midshipman in the navy of the King of Spain; but Apollo soon asserted his claims above those of Mars, and Barthélémon resigned himself to that softer sway. After pursuing his new career for a time in Paris, where he composed an opera for the Italian Theatre, he came over to England in 1765. Here also he produced an opera for the Italian stage, through the success of which he became acquainted with Garrick, and received from him a musical commission, which was settled for in a way that evinced the accustomed parsimony of that great actor and little manager. As leader of the Opera band for several seasons, and solo performer on various public occasions, Barthélémon gave ample proofs of his mastery over

the violin. His adagios in particular were much admired, and his extempore cadences were so scientific and appropriate as, to seem like the natural continuation of the composer's own ideas. Among his engagements while in London, was that of leading the band at Vauxhall Gardens; in which situation he once figured as a principal in a whimsical occurrence. It chanced, one night, when the gardens were full of fashionable company, and the stream of music was at high tide, that a bewildered *bat*, which had winged its eccentric course for some time about the walks, to the discomposure of the visitors, found its way into the illuminated orchestra, and, after having made two or three circuits there, flew into Barthélémon's face, with so forcible a familiarity as to unseat him from his eminence, and precipitate him, wholly frighted from his propriety, to the floor. He fell on his ceremonial sword, which, in breaking his fall, was itself broken; and he was picked up in a condition which fortunately did not forbid his joining in the general chorus of laughers; nor did he fail to congratulate himself, that, in falling on his own sword, he had *not* done so after the old Roman fashion*.

One of Barthélémon's points of excellence consisted in his *solo* performances of Corelli's music, in which his sweetness and polished taste were charmingly manifested. He and Salomon are supposed to have been the last who made it a regular habit to study, and to perform

* The above anecdote suggests another, of a somewhat similar cast, pertaining to the great Musical Commemoration at Westminster Abbey, in 1791. A person falling upon a double bass, as it lay on its side, immediately disappeared—nothing being seen of him, except his legs protruding out of the instrument; and for some time no one could assist him, owing to the laughter occasioned by his predicament!

in public, the compositions of Corelli. Barthélémon died in London, in the year 1808.

Dismissing, with the tribute of a simple mention, the names of Mondonville, Bertheaume, Jadin, and Grasset, we come now to the more recent time when the genius of *Viotti*, diffusing its influence over the whole modern system of violin performance, lent an especial lustre to a number of musical *satellites* who are marked in the *French* nomenclature. The Italian Viotti infused new life into the French School, which, seeking its resources more from fancy than from feeling, and (with few exceptions) relying rather upon the small excellencies of nice execution, than upon the sympathies which *expression* can command, had become somewhat exhausted. Viotti communicated to the French Violinists a share of the vigour and the intellectual character that animated his own style, and taught them

"To fill the languid pause with finer joy."

Louis Julien Castels de Labarre, one of the pupils who were modelled by the above great master, was born at Paris, 1771, of a noble family of Picardy. When finished as an instrumentalist, from the hands of Viotti, he went, at the age of twenty, to Naples, where he studied composition under Sala, at the Conservatory of La Pietà, as he did afterwards in France, under Méhul. After two years of success as "premier violon" at the Théâtre Français, he entered the orchestra of the Grand Opera. The published works of Labarre for his instrument are of the lighter kind.

Of a year later in date of birth than the preceding artist, is Pierre Jean Vacher, also of Paris. At eight years of age he commenced his labours on the violin, under Monin, of whom fame is nearly silent;

and a few years later, his *second* master (albeit "nulli secundus") was Viotti. From the age of fourteen to nineteen, Vacher was engaged as violinist at the great Theatre at Bordeaux. In the early part of the French Revolution, he went to Paris, where he remained several years in the orchestra of the Vaudeville Theatre, and became known as a composer by means of some popular airs, suited to the demands of that establishment. He was afterwards employed in the orchestras of the Théâtre Feydeau, and of the Académie de Musique, &c. He published several operas (or works) of violin music.

Pierre Rode, another of the eminent players formed by Viotti, was born at Bordeaux, in 1774. His musical tendencies were manifested from his infancy; and, after some instructions bestowed on him in compliance with his early bias, he was sent, while yet but thirteen years old, to Paris, which city has always been considered, in modern times, as the centre of the musical art in France, and enjoys indeed something approaching to a monopoly of it*. Here he was introduced to Viotti, who made kindly estimate of his capacity, and interested himself much in directing and improving its exercise. His first public appearance was in 1790, before a Parisian audience—one of his master's concertos being the subject of the display. Shortly after this, he was appointed principal second violin at the Théâtre Feydeau, and obtained further notice by means of his performance of other concertos of Viotti's, on selected occasions.

* "Paris est le foyer musical de la France: les astres les plus brillans roulent dans cette région préférée; mais hélas! leurs rayons ne portent pas la lumière à une grande distance. A peine sommes nous sortis des portes de cette capitale, que nous tombons soudain dans une obscurité profonde."—(*Castil-Blaze, de l'Opéra en France.*)

In 1796, Rode commenced professional travelling, and went through Holland and Hamburgh to Berlin. Returning homewards, he was shipwrecked on the English coast. This accident gave him an opportunity of visiting his great preceptor Viotti (who was as yet receiving English shelter and hospitality),—but it did not enable him to make the impression of his talents felt here; for, after one attempt, in which (probably through the disadvantage of being hardly known to us islanders) he met with slender encouragement, the solemn terrors then prevalent at the Alien Office intervened to arrest his ambitious bow-arm. In those really perilous days, our green-eyed government certainly saw *more* perils than had either existence or probability. It would seem as if the plague of democracy had been by them considered to infest the very garments of a Frenchman, and the air that surrounded his person. It mattered not in what shape, or with what business, he presented himself; suspicion whispered an *aliàs* against them all. If he professed to amuse, he was but the more likely to be intent on deceiving. Viewed by the help of this principle, a fiddler became obviously a highly dangerous character. If discord was confessedly mingled with his strains, surely revolution might lurk in his fiddle-case. "Let no such man be trusted;" and, accordingly, Rode was invited to discontinue his sojourn, "*parmi nous autres Anglais.*" His countryman, Mons. Fétis, in recording the particulars of Rode's career, has fallen into the error of attributing to the English *public*, instead of their political *directors*, his unhonored departure.

Re-embarking for Hamburgh, the disappointed artist travelled through Germany, and again reached Paris, the scene of his first triumphs. Here he was appointed Professor of the Violin at the Conservatory, and played

with renewed success at the Feydeau Concerts;—but, with a continued disposition for travelling, he went soon after to Madrid. Boccherini, then established in that city, entered into friendship with him, and scored several of his concertos for him.

In 1800, Rode returned to Paris, and was at once nominated Solo Violin to the private band of Bonaparte, Chief Consul. His fame and his excellence were by this time alike matured. He was invited to St. Petersburg in 1803, receiving the appointment of First Violin to the Emperor's band, with the sole duty of playing at the Court Concerts, and at those given in the Imperial Theatre. After five years thus passed with high credit, he returned to Paris, and gave what was professedly his last public concert. Great was the disappointment, however, among the discerning Parisian Amateurs, at finding that a great change had come over the *spirit* of his performance—that he had no longer at command the brilliancy and fire which had marked him for one of Viotti's *own*, but that a premature decay seemed to be upon him, although the purity of tone, the taste, the elegant style of bowing, were yet remaining. This exhibition appears to have had a chilling effect upon the artist himself, who, for a long time afterwards, was heard by his friends alone. In this latter way, his quartett-playing, accompanied by Baillot and Lamarre, created real gratification.

His love of fame, meanwhile, did not decline with the powers which had formerly attended and balanced it. He undertook a further course of travel in 1811, and went through Austria, Hungary, Styria, Bohemia, Bavaria, and Switzerland. In 1814, he was resident at Berlin, whence he returned to his native Bordeaux. He could not yet reconcile his mind, however, to the

relinquishment of a career which his abated energies forbade him to continue. It was reserved for another (and a most mortifying) visit to Paris, to convince him that the hope of shining was now but a morbid feeling within him. He quitted that scene in a state of grievous and irrecoverable depression. The wanderer came back to his home, only to languish onwards to his grave. Towards the close of 1829, a paralytic stroke affected both his body and his intellect. In this state he lingered nearly twelve months, and died in November, 1830.

Monsieur Fétis has recently referred*, with a just exultation, to the days wherein the triple force of Rode, Kreutzer, and Baillot, threw its lustre over the French School of Violin-players. He characterizes the talent of Rode as subtle, delicate, brilliant, and frequently suggestive, in its effects, of the great master who had called it forth. "There are few living," he observes, "who have heard that admirable talent in all its beauty, as it was displayed at the concerts of the Rue Feydeau, and at those of the Opera; but the artists who *have* enjoyed that pleasure, will never forget the model of perfection which then astonished them."

As a writer for his instrument (it has been remarked), Rode merits a distinguished place. His musical education, as regards the principles of composition, had been neglected, so that he was at first obliged to derive from his friends the accompaniments to his Concertos; but his melodies are remarkable for sweetness; the plans of his compositions are well conceived; and he is not without originality. His Concertos are well known and admired, wherever the violin is played. Paganini has performed them at his concerts. His quartetts—which

* "*Esquisse de l'Histoire du Violon.*"

are, in fact, brilliant solos for the first violin, accompanied by a second violin, tenor and bass—have also had great success, especially when his own skilful hand lent its aid to their execution.

Ten Concertos,—four Quartetts for two violins, tenor and bass,—three Airs with variations, for a full orchestra, and the same arranged as quartetts—three sets of violin Duetts—and a share in the compilation of the celebrated "*Méthode d'Instruction,*" adopted for the violin-students at the French Conservatory—are the principal labours of this master. He also wrote some detached pieces, as Andantes, Rondos, &c.

Rodolphe Kreutzer, the son of a German musician in the service of the King of France, was born at Versailles, in 1767, and, in consequence of his French birth-place and career, is claimed with superior right by the French School, although something of German intermixture, besides that of the blood, must be distinguished in the early lessons he received on his instrument, both from his father, and from a far more important preceptor, Anthony Stamitz.—Under the latter, his advancement was so rapid as to induce his *début*, at the age of thirteen, at the *Concert Spirituel*, where he performed a concerto, either of his own, or his master's composition, as has been variously represented. From that time to the age of twenty, his compositions for the violin became frequent, though rather directed by innate genius than by the prescriptive rules of composition, of which he had acquired very little. His desires extended meanwhile towards the condition of a theatrical Composer, in which object he was assisted by the patronage of the Queen, Marie Antoinette, as well as by the appointment he received, in 1790, of First Violin at the *Opéra Comique*. Of his *Lodoiska*, and other achievements in operatic

music, it is needless here to treat: but it may be noted as a curious fact, that his neglect of the study of harmony continued till after he had been the composer of at least three successful operas. He seemed to write by instinct; and his custom, while composing, was to walk about his room, singing his melodies, and playing on his violin, till he found an accompaniment which pleased him. When afterwards appointed a Professor at the newly-established *Conservatoire*, he fancied that to be a learned contrapuntist was necessary to the performance of his duties, and so entered, somewhat too late in life, on a course of study which had little other effect than to cripple his imagination. As a Professor, however, he is distinguished by the number of excellent pupils whom he has produced. His mode of instruction was signalized by the enthusiasm and confidence he instilled into his scholars. An energy that shrank from no difficulties, lived in the master, and was reflected in his disciples, who became distinguished, in general, for a brilliant execution.

Kreutzer made a tour, in 1798, through the north of Italy and Germany, and returned to Paris by the way of Hamburg and Holland, giving concerts in all the principal cities. After this, he wielded his instrument in the immediate service of Napoleon; and, on Rode's departure for Russia, he succeeded him as Solo Violin at the Opera; which situation he exchanged, in 1810, for that of *Chef d'Orchestre*. Fourteen years afterwards, decorated with the insignia of the Legion of Honour, he changed his post to that of general Director of the Music at the Opera; and, after this accumulation of credit, he retired in 1826. Declining health led him to Geneva, where he died, in January, 1831.

Kreutzer's compositions, independently of those for

the stage (which exceed thirty in number), consist of two "sinfonie concertanti" for two violins—one sinfonia for violin and violoncello concertante—upwards of fifty concertos, duetts, trios and quartetts—five sets of sonatas for violin and bass—eight sets of studios and capriccios—and several airs with variations. The compilation of the *Violin-system* for the Conservatory was also in part effected by him.

Charles Philippe Lafont, one of the most excellent of recently living violinists, was born at Paris, where the beauties of his execution long continued to draw numerous audiences to the concerts he was in the habit of giving. His first lessons in the art were received from his uncle, Bertheaume. After having, successively, Berton, and Navoigille the elder, as masters in composition, and acquiring, by unaided study, a knowledge of singing, he travelled with his uncle, who procured him occasions for exhibiting his various powers in the principal cities of Europe. Returning to France in 1794, he first appeared at Paris as a vocalist; but was *most* admired as a *violin-performer*, in which character he shone at the Opera concerts, and the *Salle Olympique*. He completed his studies under Kreutzer and Rode—to the latter of whom, in the sweet qualities of his style, he mainly inclined. His next journey was to Petersburg, where he resided several years, as the Emperor's First Violin. In 1805 or 1806, he returned to his native city; and was appointed leader at the King's Chapel.

A suavity and elegance, especially in *cantabile* movements—a tasteful selection of ornament—and an exemplary purity of tone—have been remarked as denoting this artist. The scene in his career which exhibits him in

an indiscreet rivalry with Paganini, will be found under the memoir given of that extraordinary person.

Pierre Baillot, of high name in the French School, which he was partly enabled to acquire through Italian instruction, was born about the year 1770, near Paris, to which city the curious in coincidences will be delighted to find that they can trace the local origin of so many of those eminent violinists who have made it, also, the scene of their brilliant exertions. Baillot repaired early to Rome, where he remained some years under the tuition of Polani, an excellent Professor of the school of Tartini. His own feeling and intellect appear to have done more for his advancement, however, than the lessons of preceptors. An artist of a very high order, well versed in the mechanical resources of his instrument, he was also thoroughly embued with musical sentiment, and was a discriminating judge in matters of composition.

After his return from Italy, the sound and excellent qualifications he evinced were the cause of his succeeding Rode, about the year 1795, as Professor of the violin at the Paris Conservatory. He was the editor, and (with Rode and Kreutzer) a joint compiler, of the noted System of Instruction which has contributed so important an aid towards the successful formation of, perhaps, all the living French violinists. The System for the Violoncello, in use at the same institution, was likewise produced under his editorship.

Fine taste, variety of manner, admirable bowing, and forcible tone, marked the performance of Baillot. In playing solos, to accompany the dancers at the Opera, Baillot was, consciously, out of his element; but at the annual quartett-meetings, where the business was that of giving manifestation to the genius of Boccherini,

Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, his soul was kindled, and his powers came forth.—His pupils have been many —including Habeneck and Mazas.

Alexandre Jean Boucher, born, "comme tant d'autres" of his class, in fiddler-fostering Paris, came into the world in 1770, and arrived at early excellence on "the leading instrument." When seventeen years old, he went to Spain, where he was appointed Violinist of the Chamber and Chapel of Charles IV. During the time that monarch resided in France, Boucher was also in his suite. His mode of obtaining introduction to the "Majesty of Spain" was as remote from all the prescriptions of courtly etiquette as can well be imagined. It forms the subject of a good anecdote, thus translated from the "Souvenirs" of Blangini, the well-known musical composer :—

"Boucher, when a very young man, at Madrid, was without friends, nor had anything to depend on, save his bow and his strings. He knew that the King of Spain was passionately fond of music, and he was anxious that his Majesty should hear him play ; but, having no friend who could help him to obtain an introduction at Court, he fell upon the following scheme for the attainment of his object. One day, he stationed himself in the doorway of the palace gate-keeper's lodge. The man at first scrupled to allow him to remain there ; but he at length consented, and Boucher began to play in his most exquisite style. After a little time, the rolling of the King's carriage was heard at a distance ; his Majesty was going out to take a drive, and, as he approached, Boucher played with increased energy and delicacy. The King, surprised at what he heard, stopped and enquired who was playing. On being informed, he ordered that Boucher should be presented to him. He

directed him to go to the palace on the following day. Boucher of course obeyed the mandate. The King was enchanted with his talent, and, shortly after, he was appointed first violin of his Majesty's Chamber Band."

Shortly after the second restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France, Boucher proceeded to St. Petersburgh, where he was engaged to give some concerts. Here again we derive from Signor Blangini an anecdote, which he states himself to have received from an individual of undoubted veracity, who had it from the violinist himself.

"Every one who has seen Boucher, must have been struck by his singular resemblance to the Emperor Napoleon: this resemblance was remarkable, not only in his countenance, but in his figure. During his stay at St. Petersburgh, he was one evening engaged to perform at a concert given by the Grand Chamberlain, Prince Narishkin. The Emperor Alexander was present, and in the course of the evening his Majesty stepped up to Boucher, and said, with the affability for which he was distinguished,

"Monsieur Boucher, I have a favour to ask of you."

Boucher bowed.

"It is an affair," continued the Emperor, "quite unconnected with the exercise of your profession."

"I am wholly at your Majesty's service."

"Well, come to the palace to-morrow morning, at twelve precisely. You shall be immediately shown into my cabinet, and I will tell you what I have to request. It is a favour which will greatly oblige me."

"Boucher puzzled himself the whole night, but without being able to form any probable conjecture of what the Emperor wanted. Next day, he repaired to the palace at the appointed hour. When he was ushered

into the Emperor's cabinet, the persons there, among whom was the Grand Duke Constantine, immediately withdrew. Alexander desired Boucher to follow him into an adjoining apartment. There he saw, on a sofa, a small three-cornered hat, a sword, a Colonel's uniform of the chasseurs of the French Imperial Guard, and a cross of an officer of the Legion of Honour.

"Now," said the Emperor Alexander, "I will explain to you the favour I have to request. All those objects which you see there, belonged to the Emperor Napoleon; they were taken during the campaign of Moscow. I have frequently heard of your *resemblance* to Napoleon; but I did not expect to find the likeness so strong as it is. My mother often regrets that she never saw Napoleon; and what I wish you to do—is to put on that dress—and I will present you to her."

"The Emperor withdrew, and left Boucher to array himself in the imperial costume. When he had completed his toilette, he was conducted to the apartment of the Empress. The Emperor assured his mother that the illusion was complete, and that she might now say she had seen *the great man.* These were Alexander's words."

— Libon, born in 1775, was one of the pupils of Viotti. He became first violinist at the *Chapel* of the King of Portugal—and subsequently held a similar appointment at Madrid, under Charles IV. In this our Protestant country, where the violin holds no place in the musical service of the church, the mention of such engagements as these, represents hardly any definite idea to the mind. "What can the *fiddle* possibly have to do with *religion?*" is a question very likely, here, to precipitate itself from the lips of some honest mystified Englishman. It is a question which *I* do not undertake to answer, having

no such *experience* on the subject as would give any value to my reply; but I recommend those who are anxious for a solution of the point, to travel abroad—to witness personally this kind of conjunction, as it exists there—and to *test* it by its effects upon heart and mind.—In 1803, Libon returned to Paris, and was successively first violinist to the Empresses Josephine and Maria Louisa, and to Charles X. He was the composer of several much-admired Studies, and of various pieces played at the *Conservatoire*. He died in 1838.

— Bellon, who presents oddly the example of a fine artist made out of a man of commerce, is one of the French violinists who have displayed their talents in our metropolis. The following notice of him was given in the Harmonicon, on the occasion of his performing, in 1826, a Concerto of Kreutzer's, at the Philharmonic Concert:—

"The composition denotes a rich invention, united to great practical knowledge, and was played with a feeling, a firmness, a length of bow, and a breadth of tone, which, in these squeaking days, were as unexpected as delightful. M. Bellon is already a highly distinguished disciple of that fine school of the violin which boasts of Viotti as its head, and enumerates among its members, Rode, Baillot and Kreutzer; the latter of whom—the well-known composer of many admired operas—is his master, and has so well seconded his natural inclinations, that he has enabled him, in the short space of four years, to stand forward and be acknowledged as one of the greatest violinists of the day. His history is rather curious: he was a respectable tradesman in Paris, and was offered a violin in barter for one of his commodities, an umbrella. He agreed to the exchange, acquired some little knowledge of the instrument, became a pupil of

Kreutzer, was accepted (though beyond the prescribed age) at the *Conservatoire*, and is now what we have described him."

François-Antoine Habeneck (the eldest of three brothers of this name) was born at Mezières, June 1st, 1781. Being the son of a performer in a regimental band who was a native of Manheim, but had taken service in France, he learned from his father to play the violin, and at the age of ten he played Concertos in public. After residing in several towns where his father's regiment was in garrison, he went to Brest, and passed many years there, solely occupied with the care of developing his faculties, as far as he could do so, without model, and without master. While there, he wrote several Concertos and even Operas, without any other guide than his instinct, and without possessing any notions of the art of writing. He was more than twenty years of age when he arrived in Paris. Being admitted to the *Conservatoire*, as a pupil of M. Baillot, he was not long in placing himself in the first rank amongst the violinists who proceeded from that school; and, after a brilliant competition, he obtained the first prize in 1804, and was appointed *répétiteur* of his Master's class. The Empress Josephine, after having heard him in a solo, testified her satisfaction by a pension of 1200 francs. About the same epoch, he obtained, as the result of a competition, a place among the first violins at the opera. Less fortunate in a second competition, which was shortly after opened, for the post of leader of the second violins at the same theatre, Habeneck saw preferred to himself a violinist of moderate ability, of the name of Chol, a very respectable man, but by no means equal to the young artist in talent. In a short time, however, this injustice

was repaired, for he was trusted with the post of first violin *adjoint* for the solos; and when Kreutzer took the direction of the orchestra, after the retirement of Persuis, Habeneck succeeded him as first violin.

In 1806, he had become distinguished for that happy organization which specially qualified him for the direction of a concert-orchestra. At this period, it was the practice, for the violinists who had obtained a first prize at the concerts of the *Conservatoire*, alternately to direct the concerts of that school for a year. But the superior capabilities of Habeneck for this undertaking soon became so evident, that he remained in possession of the appointment till the temporary close of the Conservatory in 1815, after the entry of the allied armies into Paris. It was in these concerts that he caused to be played, for the first time, Beethoven's First Symphony (*in C*). At a later period, when he was charged with the direction of the sacred concerts at the Opera, he continued to make the works of this great artist known to the few enlightened amateurs who came to hear them. But it was, especially, when a new Concert Society was organized at the Conservatory, in 1828, that these grand compositions excited the liveliest enthusiasm by the warmth and energy which M. Habeneck was able to impress upon the execution of them.

Appointed director of the Opera in 1821, Habeneck discharged the functions of that office until 1824. At this period, the Viscount of Rochefoucault changed the administration of that theatre; but, in order to indemnify M. Habeneck, he created for him the place of Inspector-General of the *Conservatoire*, which he never filled, and a third violin class; and caused Kreutzer to retire, in order to give to M. Habeneck his post of chef-d'orchestre to the Opera. After the revolution of 1830, M. Ha-

beneck added to these appointments that of first violin in the King's band. His best pupils at the Conservatory were M. Cavillon and M. Allard.

M. Tolbecque is one of the artists who have acquired reputation in France. In the season of 1831, he visited England, and performed at the Philharmonic Concert; since which time, he has become familiarized among us, with a reputation that stands higher for solidity than for brilliancy. M. Tolbecque has a younger brother, who is also a violinist of some skill, and is known in England.

Prosper Sainton, whose talents have been advantageously known to British audiences for several seasons past, was born at Boulogne, in 1814, being the son of a merchant in that town. His parents, who were no votaries of music, gave him an education that looked towards the law. His maternal grandfather, however, discerning something of the youth's real bias, gave him some initiatory musical notions, and then succeeded, though with difficulty, in obtaining the paternal consent that his grandson should be provided, at college, with an instructor for the violin. Opposing fears represented that such an indulgence would wholly turn aside the pupil from his severer studies. Notwithstanding these prognostications, he gained an eminent position in his class, and was afterwards admitted Bachelor of Letters, with the fullest credit.

In 1830, the period at which young Sainton passed his examination for the University, the Revolution of July burst forth, and proved nearly the ruin of his father (then President of the Tribunal of Commerce at Toulouse), who became deeply involved in the commercial crisis that ensued. In spite of this disaster, he was anxious that his son should still maintain the jurisprudential complexion of his studies; but filial respect

could not *always* hold in suppression the tendencies of struggling nature—and the son's vocation for music became more and more manifest. The notion of entering, *one* day, the Paris Conservatory, had taken root in his mind. A permission to repair to the capital for *legal* purposes, led to the fulfilment of the cherished vision. In the trustful idea of being able, by his progress in a new direction, to furnish ground for a reversal of the paternal decree, he entered, with a beating heart, within the resonant walls of the *Conservatoire*. There, received, in 1832, into Monsieur Habeneck's class, he commenced the only career that could satisfy his long-baffled inclination. For the first year, indeed, he managed to pursue his law-course, along with the very dissimilar course prescribed at the Conservatory;—but, after that vain trial of a somewhat *Mezentian* process, he surrendered himself entirely to his passion for the violin, and declined all further concern with Justinian and the *Pandects*. The *dry* was thus exchanged for the *delectable*—hard fact, for tender feeling. *Law*, by this arrangement, had one reluctant follower the *less*—and *Music*, one loving disciple the *more*.

Fortified with a potent plea—that of the second *prize*, which he obtained in 1833—the young aspirant succeeded in reconciling his father to his engagement in the artistic arena; and then, with powers fully emancipated, his progress was rapid, and the following year brought him to the attainment of the *first* prize.

The *début* of Sainton in Paris was of a most encouraging success; but, without waiting to construct a fixed reputation there, he quitted the capital, to enter on a course of professional travel, to which mode of life, a youthful imagination, unshaded by experience, was lending the usual irresistible attractions. The result, however, shewed no disheartening contrast with hopes

thus sanguine; for he met with favour everywhere. After visiting Italy, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Spain, he returned to the place of his nativity, to share with parents, of whom he was then become the sole support, the fruits of his persevering labours.

In 1844, after the decease of his mother, Sainton made his first appearance in London, where his reception at the concerts of the Philharmonic Society was such as to induce his return in the year following;—since which time, he has only quitted our shores to add *one* more country to his travelling list—namely, Holland,—where new successes, crowned with presents from Royalty, gladdened his career. His residence in England has been followed by various appointments—those of Violin-Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, Leader at the Italian Opera and at the Philharmonic, and (in 1848) Conductor and Violin Solo-player in Her Majesty's State Band.

Monsieur Sainton's works for the violin, to the present time, comprise:—1. A Fantasia in A.—2. An Air with Variations, in D.—3. A Capriccio, with Piano Accompaniment.—4. A Concert Waltz.—5. A Concerto in A, Op. 9.—6. An Italian *Thema*, with Variations, Op. 10.—7. A Fantasia on Lindpaintner's "Standard-Bearer."—8. Fantasia on Lucrezia Borgia.—9. Souvenirs from the "Figlia del Reggimento."—10. Air with Variations, in G.—11. Concerto in D minor.—12. Concerted Solo in E major.

Under the French School, as most nearly assimilating with it in character, may be included the able artists who, in recent days, have contributed to the honour of Belgium. At the head of these, stand De Beriot and Vieuxtemps;—of whom, as well as of their compatriot, Artot, some account shall here be introduced.

Charles Auguste De Beriot, conspicuous for the perfection of the qualities by which his playing has been distinguished—for remarkably just intonation—grace—refined taste—rich and charming tone—and for elegant bowing and wonderful execution, was born at Louvain, of noble parentage, in 1802. Left an orphan at the age of nine, he found, in M. Tiby, professor of music in that town, a tutor, a second father, and a master who laboured with zeal to develop his happy dispositions for music. Already had he arrived at a certain degree of skill on the violin; and his progress had been so rapid, that he was able to play Viotti's Concerto in A flat (letter H) in such mode as to excite the admiration of his compatriots. Endued, besides, with a contemplative mind (says M. Fétis), and having no model immmediately at hand that he could imitate, he sought within himself for that principle of the beautiful, whereof he could have no notion, except through the spontaneous strivings of his own individuality. As to the report that he was the pupil of Jacotot, it appears that the general attention of the Belgians had been directed for years to the prodigious results which were said to be derived from "Jacotot's Method;" and that De Beriot, wishing to know what advantage *he* might obtain from its processes, had some conversations with its inventor, and then learned from it little more than two things, of *gravity* rather than of *novelty;* viz. that perseverance triumphs over all obstacles—and that, in general, we are not *willing* to do all that we are *able* to do. The young artist comprehended the truth contained in these oracular propositions, and turned it to his own profit. To this extent only can De Beriot be called the pupil of Jacotot.

A happy organization, moral as well as physical—

an education well commenced—and labour regulated with the greatest judgment—could not fail to ensure for De Beriot the acquisition of a very remarkable talent. Nothing was still necessary but contact with fine talents of other kinds, in order to finish, to adjust, and to give determined character. De Beriot was nineteen years old, when (in 1821) he quitted his native town, and repaired to Paris; where his first object of care was to play before Viotti, at that time Director of the Opera. After hearing him with attention, "You have," said the renowned artist, "a fine style; give yourself up to the business of perfecting it; hear all the men of talent; profit by everything, and imitate nothing." This advice seemed to imply the recommendation to have no master. De Beriot, however, thought it necessary to take lessons of Baillot, and entered the Conservatory with this view; but he was not long in discovering that his talent had already a character of its own, which it would be difficult to modify, without injuring its originality. He continued therefore but a few months in the classes of the Conservatory, resumed the control of his own labours, and soon appeared at concerts with brilliant success. His first Airs with Variations, compositions full of grace and novelty, augmented his rising reputation.

From a brilliant career in Paris, De Beriot passed, in 1826, into England, where he met with a corresponding reception. In London, as well as in some of our provincial cities, he gave concerts, that were attended with transports of applause. Besides engagements at the Philharmonic Society, he was heard at some of the Musical Festivals, which take place annually in the principal towns of England. Of the impression he produced among ourselves, a marked *individual* instance is on record, in the fact (stated in the Harmonicon) of a

certain gentleman travelling from Glasgow expressly to hear him play a Concerto at the Birmingham Musical Festival, and declaring himself amply recompensed by the result, for his trouble, time, expense and fatigue! To his performance during one of his later visits to England, the *Harmonicon* thus alluded:—

"We knew not which most to admire—his tone, his vigor, the determined manner in which he sprang to his extreme shifts, his staccato passages, the bow bounding from the string with an elasticity almost magical, or the boldness and certainty of his double stops."

Returning to his native land, with a now brilliant renown, De Beriot was presented to King William, who, although he had little love for music, understood the necessity of assuring the independence of a young artist who gave such promise of becoming an honour to his country. He granted him a pension of 2000 florins, with the title of "first violin solo" in his private band. The Revolution of 1830 deprived De Beriot of these advantages.

It was at one time objected to this artist, that, bounding the scope of his talent to the composing and playing of Airs with Variations, he shut himself up within too confined a sphere. Of this reproach he cleared himself, by the composition of *Concertos*, which he played on various occasions, and wherein he discovered grander proportions, both as to conception and execution. The last of these Concertos is full of originality.

A marked incident in the life of this artist, was his hymeneal engagement with the celebrated Malibran; and the close opportunities thus possessed of hearing that accomplished woman, appear to have exercised the happiest influence on his own talent. At Naples, where he appeared at a concert given at the Theatre *San Carlos*, he obtained

an enthusiastic success, very uncommon among the Italians; for that nation, passionate in its admiration of *song*, pays usually a lower degree of homage to *instrumentalists*.—An ancedote or two may serve to close our notice of this eminent artist. One of our own violinists, more noted for his execution than his feeling, was once complaining to him that he found he could produce very little effect with his (De Beriot's) *airs variés*.—"*C'est qu'il y faut de l'âme!*" ("What they require, is *soul*") was the laconic reply of the Belgian.

An auditor at one of the concerts here, in which De Beriot was to exhibit his powers being previously unacquainted with the person of the great artist, inquired of a neighbouring sitter (apparently French) whether *that* were De Beriot—indicating, at the same time, the individual on whom his supposition rested. The foreign gentleman made answer in the affirmative; adding, with enthusiasm, and in English of his own modification, "Sare, you may be sure dat dere is *bot won* De Ber-r-r-riot!"

Henri Vieuxtemps was born at Verviers, in 1820. His father, a soldier retired from the service, practised as a maker and tuner of musical instruments; and little Henry evinced, at an early date, his natural taste for music, by the pleasure he found in listening to the performances of his father on the violin. At two years of age, he amused himself for hours together by rubbing the hair of a violin-bow on the strings of a little instrument. At the age of four and a half, he began to read music. A zealous amateur, charmed with the child's happy indications, offered to defray the expenses of his musical education, and placed him under the tuition of M. Ledoux, an able professor of the violin, who, by his lessons, developed the talents of the young violinist,

destined soon to become one of the most distinguished artists of his day. So rapid was his progress, that he was enabled, at the age of eight years, to undertake, with his master, a tour for the purpose of giving concerts in the principal towns of Belgium. While at Brussels, he met with De Beriot, who, struck with his precocious skill, gratutiously gave him lessons for several months. In the spring of 1830, he went with his new master to Paris, and performed at a concert given in the *Salle* of the *Rue de Cléry*. The future eminence of the artist-child was then confidently predicted. Returning to Verviers, a short time after, Vieuxtemps resumed his studies. In 1833, he engaged with his father in a tour through Germany, during which he acquired, by the custom of playing in public, the assurance necessary to the unembarrassed display of talent. It was at Vienna that he obtained his first really important success. While there, he took some lessons of Simon Sechter, Organist to the Court, and then returned to Brussels, where he only stayed a few months. At the end of 1834, he went to Paris, and, finding no opportunity of exhibiting his talents in that city, he proceeded to London, where, however, his reception fell somewhat short of his expectations. Returning to Paris in the summer of 1835, he resolved to perfect his knowledge of music, and entered on a course of studies in composition, under Reicha. The superficial but rapid method of this professor was exactly that which best suited an instrumentalist, little anxious to acquire a profound knowledge of the forms of counterpoint, for which he considered he had no use. After this, he began writing his first compositions, and played them in the course of a tour in Holland, which he made in 1836;—he then went again to Vienna, and published his first works.

In 1838, Vieuxtemps played with success at the theatre at Brussels, and also in a concert given in the Church of the Augustins by the Philanthropic Society. His performances were "fantaisies" and fragments of Concertos, in which some happy ideas were noticeable, but mixed with incoherences. Immediately after this, he set out for Russia, giving concerts, by the way, at Prague Leipsic, Dresden, and Berlin. On quitting this last city for Petersburgh, he was seized with a serious illness, in a little Russian village, and was detained there more than two months. On his arrival at Petersburgh, he met with splendid success, as he did also at Moscow. It was in Russia that he wrote a new Violin Concerto, and a Grand "Fantaisie" (orchestral), the superiority of which, when compared with his foregoing productions, is so marked, that his detractors, both at Paris and Brussels, availed themselves of this fact to dispute the authorship. It is no unreasonable supposition, that his future works will give an emphatic denial to these jealous insinuations. After a stay of more than a year in Russia, Vieuxtemps returned to Brussels in 1840, and, the 7th of July following, he played his new Concerto and his "Fantaisie" in a grand concert given for the benefit of the musicians of the orchestra at the theatre. These pieces, in the execution of which the artist displayed the finest talent, excited transports of enthusiasm. Vieuxtemps played them again, with similar result, at the concerts given at Antwerp, on the inauguration of the statue of Rubens.

A Parisian success formed now the object of Vieuxtemps' advancing ambition. This he obtained in the winter following, exciting no less interest by the merit of his later productions, than by his skill upon his instrument. He afterwards made a second tour in Holland, and

then revisited Germany, and appeared, for the third time, at Vienna. Having travelled through Poland, he returned to Brussels in June 1843, and, in the fall of that year, was heard in America. His subsequent career has comfirmed all the anticipations formed by the judicious as to the distinction he would attain.

Joseph Artot, born at Brussels in 1815, had for his first music-master his father, a player of the first horn at the theatre of that city. At the age of five, he *solfa-ed* with facility; and, with less than eighteen-months' study on the violin, he was able to play at the theatre, in a Concerto of Viotti's. Charmed with the felicitous aptitude of the child, M. Snel, at that time first violin-solo, undertook the task of developing it by his instructions, and not long afterwards sent him to Paris. There, Artot was admitted as a page at the Chapel-Royal; and when he had attained his ninth year, he passed under the direction of the elder Kreutzer, for the study of the violin. This distinguished artist conceived a regard for him, and often gave him lessons, out of class, at the Conservatory. On the retirement of Kreutzer, in 1826, his brother Augustus Kreutzer, who replaced him, evinced for Artot no less kindness than his predecessor. Artot had just completed his twelfth year, when the second violin-prize was awarded him, in the competition at the Conservatory. In the year following, he obtained the first prize. He then quitted Paris, to visit his own country—playing with success at Brussels, and making, some months after, a journey to London, where he was not less fortunate. Returning subsequently to Paris, Artot became attached to the orchestras of various theatres; but the desire of making himself known caused him to renounce these appoint-

ments, and travel in the south of France. The result was successful everywhere. He has written *quatuors* for the violin, and a *quintett* for piano, two violins, alto and bass; two airs with variations for the violin,—and other works.

Shifting the ground, and giving a fresh stir to our attention, let us now pass "from *gay* to *grave*, from lively to severe"—or, in other words, from *France* to *Germany;* in which latter country, will be found ample matter for observation and comment, as relates to the theme we are pursuing.

CHAPTER V.

THE GERMAN SCHOOL.

'Plain, without pomp—and rich, without a show." DRYDEN.

GERMANY and Italy may *each* be regarded as an abiding realm of sweet sounds, a special nursery and *home* of music. They are the two countries from which, since the days of modern civilization, the great supplies of musical thought and feeling have been diffused abroad, for the delight of nations;—the *feeling*, for the most part, proceeding from Italy, and the *thought* from Germany, comformably to the characteristics of the two people respectively. Impulse and passion predominate on the Italian side—intellect and fancy on the German; and the division into two great schools, or systems, marked severally by these opposite qualities, takes its date from about the commencement of the 18th century. The two musical *natures*, thus distinguished from each other, have found each a different channel for its *expression*—that of Italy becoming essentially *vocal*, that of Germany, *instrumental*. Italian music is fresh from the heart, spontaneous, and *glowing* with melody: German music, true to the spirit of its birth-place, is either grave and solid, or wild and fantastic. Less simple than the Italian in its elements, the German musical genius has

sought its chief glory amid the intricate combinations of orchestral science, where its laborious and meditative turn can have fullest exposition.

Passing from these general remarks to a consideration of the German School of the *Violin*, in particular, we may observe, that, although derived originally, like all the others, from that of Italy, and contracting no inconsiderable obligations to it in its progress, it has been, on the whole, much less indebted to the Italians for resources and support, than the School either of France or England. The cause of this arises out of the admitted fact, that the Germans are essentially a more musical people*—are more deeply imbued with a musical character of their own—than the natives of the two latter countries. They have been less willing, as well as less needing, than these, to incur the debt to Italy —and certainly less willing to add to its amount. The love of the instrument diffused itself very speedily among them (the Germans), and their own powerful musical organization enabled them not only to modify more promptly, after their own character, the hints which they received from its original Italian cultivators, but to be satisfied with a smaller quantity of confirmation from the same source. Their comparative independence, however, or disinclination to borrow, has been somewhat unfavourable to the completeness of their success as *performers* on the violin. They have, as it were, impressed their own stamp and character upon it

* The universal diffusion of musical tendencies among the Germans has been often made the subject of remark. A late traveller, visiting the Theatre at Cassel, says that the orchestra there was half filled with *officers*, who fiddled in their regimental uniform, without considering the practice as at all derogatory from their dignity.

—that is to say, they have attained an honest solidity of execution, of high value in orchestral playing; but, with a few prominent exceptions, such as Kiesewetter and Mayseder, they seem to have neglected, as uncongenial to them, the lighter graces and refinements which have been so readily caught up by the more imitative Frenchman. As violinists of *display*, therefore, they must be content to rank below the French. They are below them in that which their dignity has not thought proper to make the subject of competition—the "manual exercise" of the instrument. They are inferior in *execution*, and therefore less effective as solo-players; for though the German violinists have, in recent times, enjoyed some repute for their skill in fingering difficult passages with the left hand, they have frequently been deficient with the right; that is to say, indifferently versed in the dexterities of the bow.

The ingenious author of "A Ramble among the Musicians of Germany" has considered the Violin School of that country, at present, to be inferior, not only to the French—which there is no contesting—but also to that of England. In this latter notion I cannot help thinking him mistaken—and I would appeal to his own declaration, that although in Germany "one may find no band equal to that of the Philharmonic Society, fifty may be found, *only* inferior to it." This fact supposes of necessity a very large body of good sound violin-players, whose united merits render it scarcely possible to regard the state of the art in their country as *inferior* to what it is in ours.

The Germans have, after all admitted draw-backs, a high renown in connection with that leading instrument which it is the business of these pages to celebrate. They have the renown that justly attaches to the production of

the greatest *writers* of all for the *Violin Family*. Their compositions for the instrument, in its *single* state, are perhaps over-laboured, over-full of chromatic passages, and wanting in the broad, simple, vocal character of the Italian music of the same class ;—they have been content, individually, to *talk* with the violin, whilst the Italians have *sung* with it ; —but—they have tasked their own genius to find scope for its powers in the aggregate—to develop its resources *in combination* with those instruments that are its immediate relatives ; and, in this collective character, they have given new triumphs to it. The names of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, at once suggest themselves, and assert for their country, under this view, a superiority which the world does not seek to dispute. In the *quartetts*, and other instrumental pieces, up to *symphonies* inclusive, which have been produced by these great men, all the higher capabilities of bowed instruments are consulted and brought forward, with a nicety of discernment, and a richness, variety, and grandeur of effect, which excite equally our surprise and gratification.—Let us now consider, in their order, the principal German masters whose eminence relates particularly to the violin.

It is hardly necessary to enumerate all the early performers mentioned with commendation by Walther in his Dictionary, since their fame and influence do not appear to have travelled beyond their own country. We will therefore commence with David Funk, originally a singer at Reichenbach, where he was born in the early part of the seventeenth century. He was an excellent musician, and a capital performer on the violin and the viol-da-gamba, besides displaying talent on the harpsichord and the guitar. He was, moreover, a general scholar, and one of the most elegant versifiers in

Germany. Independently of his excellence as a practical musician, he obtained credit as a composer, in a variety of styles; and his compositions for the church and the chamber were much admired. His talents, brilliant and diversified as they were, suffered some tarnish from his immoral conduct. It was in 1670 that he began to shine as a composer, by the publication of a collection of pieces for the viol-da-gamba. He was under the patronage of the Princess of Ostfrise, during seven years. That Princess, however, dying in 1689, Funk, then more than sixty years old, returning to the place of his nativity, succeeded in obtaining several appointments; but these he had scarcely retained for a year, when the extreme irregularity of his life deprived him of them, and reduced him to the necessity of quitting the town as hastily as possible. It was in the depth of winter; and in his flight, through frost and snow, he arrived at the gate of the castle of Schleitz. The sordid state of his habiliments made so repulsive an impression on the porter, that he refused him admittance; but his good fortune, prevailing, brought to the spot the chapel-master, Liebich, who, acquainted with his merit, though previously a stranger to his person, expressed his desire for the honor of his friendship, and, in the name of the lord of the castle, whose favour and protection he himself enjoyed, invited the fugitive to his patron's table. The Count was so delighted with his musical talents and various knowledge, that he retained him as his friend and companion, till letters arrived from Wohnsiedel, claiming him as a moral delinquent, to answer for some part of his past conduct. The Count, disposed to favour him as much as the nature of the case would admit, advised him to depart secretly, and afforded him every assistance for his journey. Funk, once more a wanderer, with-

out knowing whither to go, was, a few days afterwards, found dead, behind a hedge, in a field near Arnstadt!

It is doubtful whether any of the violin compositions of this master are extant; but, among his sacred instrumental pieces, there is one which has received the encomium of all real judges of music: it is a *drama passionale*, the words of which, as well as the music, were his own.

Thomas Baltzar, born at Lubeck about 1630, was esteemed the finest performer on the violin of his time. He came to England in 1658, at which time the instrument had not yet been enabled to manifest its real powers among us, nor to emerge (as it shortly afterwards did) from the low estimation in which it was held. Baltzar may be considered as having helped in no small degree to prepare the way for its rescue from humility in this country. He lived, for about two years after his arrival here, in the house of Sir Anthony Cope, of Hanwell, in Oxfordshire. He is said to have first taught the English the practice of shifting (that is to say, of what is termed the *whole-shift*), and the use of the upper part of the finger-board—in like manner as Geminiani is believed to have been our first instructor in the *half-shift*.* It is certain that the power of execution and command of the instrument, exhibited by Baltzar, were matter of novelty among us, although we had a native performer, of no mean abilities at that period, in the person of Davis Mell, who, in delicacy of tone and manner, seems

* Dr. Burney remarks that Geminiani used to claim the *invention* of the half-shift on the violin, and that he probably first brought it to England; but that the Italians ascribed it to Vivaldi, and others to the elder Matteis, who came hither in King William's time.

even to have exceeded the more potent and renowned German. Baltzar was of a Bacchanalian turn in his habits, and was believed to have brought his end somewhat the nearer thereby. His remains obtained the honor of a place in Westminster Abbey, in the year 1663. Dr. Burney has characterized his compositions as discovering "genius and a strong hand."

Henry John Francis Biber, vice-chapel-master to the Bishop of Salzburgh, seems to have been one of the best violin-players of his time; and his *solos*, which he published in 1681 (with a bass), are stated by Dr. Burney to comprise more of fancy, as well as of difficulty, than any music of the same period. One of the pieces is written on three staves, as a score for two violins and bass, but is designed to be played (as regards the violin) in *double stops*. Others are played in different tunings of fourths and fifths, as for a treble viol.

Godfrey Finger, a Silesian, was a voluminous composer for the violin; in a style of less power than that of Baltzar, but of more polish, and approaching somewhat to the Italians, Bassani and Torelli. He was some years resident in England, having received, in 1685, the appointment of chapel-master to King James II. On returning to Germany, he became chamber-musician to the Queen of Prussia in 1702, and, in 1717, chapel-master to the Court of Gotha.

John Gottlieb Graun, brother of the celebrated chapel-master of that name, and born about the year 1700, was an excellent performer on the violin, and a respectable composer, of the old school. He was concert-master to the King of Prussia, and there are extant of his writings, several overtures, symphonies, concertos, a "Salve Regina," and some masses. He

transmitted, through several good pupils, the serviceable solidity of his talent.

Francis Benda, usually commemorated as the originator of a distinct style of violin-performance in Germany, was a native of Bohemia, and born in the year 1709. At the age of seven, he commenced vocal studies, and, two years afterwards, became a sopranist in the choir of St. Nicholas, at Prague. He soon afterwards went to Dresden, where he was immediately received among the *élèves* of the *Chapelle Royale*, in which situation he continued eighteen months. About this period he began to practise the violin, and had no other resource than that of engaging himself with a company of itinerant musicians, who attended fêtes and fairs. While thus situated, he formed an acquaintance with a blind Jew, of the name of Loebel, a virtuoso of no mean order, who became his master and his model. At length, tired of this wandering life, he returned to Prague, and took lessons of Kouyezek, an excellent violinist of that town. He was now eighteen; and, eager in the pursuit of professional excellence, resolved to visit Vienna, where he soon found an opportunity of profiting by the example of the then celebrated Franciscello. After a residence of two years in that city, he went to Warsaw, where he was nominated Chapel-Master. In 1732, at the recommendation of Quantz, the Prince Royal of Prussia (afterwards Frederic II) received him into his band. Anxious for further improvement in his art, he became the pupil of Graun, for the violin; then studied harmony under his brother; and afterwards learned composition of Quantz himself. In 1732, he replaced Graun as the King's Concert-Master, which situation he held till his death, at Potsdam, 1786.

Of the peculiar qualities of Benda, as a violinist, Dr. Burney, in his Travels, thus speaks: —"His manner was neither that of Tartini, nor of Veracini, nor that of any other leader; it was purely his own, though founded on the several models of the greatest masters:" —and Hillar, in his Biography, tells us "that his tones were of the finest description, the clearest and most euphonious that can be imagined. The rapidity of his execution, and the mellow sweetness of his altissimo notes, were unequalled. With him, the violin had no difficulties. He was master of all its powers, and knew when to use them."

John Stamitz, Concert-Master and Chamber-Musician at Mannheim, and regarded, like the preceding artist, as the founder of a distinct class of German violinists, was born in 1719, at a small town in Bohemia, where his father was a school-master. Besides the high repute he enjoyed as regards the formation of pupils, Stamitz has attained a just celebrity by his written works. These (which include a curiosity in art—a *duett* for *one violin*) consist principally of symphonies or overtures, concertos, quartetts and trios. Though exhibiting a masterly character, they convey the impression, at this period, of belonging too peculiarly to the old school, and have been considered, by some critics, to savour too much of the Church style.

The successors of Benda and Stamitz, still adding some improvements to the precepts or the practice inculcated by those eminent directors, may be said to have created a school of their own, at the head of which we should place Leopold Mozart (author of "*Der Violinschule*"), Fraenzl, and Cramer, who made some approach to Tartini, his contemporary, and flourished long in England, as a concerto-performer and leader.

Of the first and the last of these three professors, some account shall here be subjoined.

Leopold Mozart, father of him who, in the fullest sense permitted to sublunary credit, may be called, "The Undying One," was born at Augsburg in 1719. After having completed his studies, and particularly a course of jurisprudence, at Salzburg, young Leopold entered the family of the Count of Thurn, in the somewhat odd quality of *Valet-de-Chambre Musicien*. The situation of a violinist having become vacant in the chapel of the Prince Bishop of Salzburg, he obtained it in 1743. His compositions made him favourably known in Germany; but his reputation was extended principally by the *Method* for the Violin, which he published in 1756, and which, for half a century, was considered as the best work of the kind.

In 1762, Leopold Mozart obtained the post of Second Chapel-Master at the Court of Salzburg. Of seven children whom he had by his marriage, there remained to him only the son, afterwards so famous, and a daughter, whose success in childhood promised a talent which was never realized. The musical education of the children occupied all the time which his duties and his works left to the father. A little while after his nomination as Second Chapel-master, he commenced long tours with his son and daughter, visiting the principal courts of Germany, Holland, England and France, and passed many years in Italy. Returning to Salzburg, rich in the hopes that centered on his son, —but with an exchequer nearly exhausted by the charges attendant on so much itinerancy—he did not again quit the residence of his Prince till 1775. Anxiously careful about ameliorating the condition of his family, he failed to secure that object, and became

more and more impoverished. The forms and practices of a scrupulous devotion furnished him, however, with some consolation in his griefs, and alleviated his sense of suffering from the gout. He died at Salzburg, in 1787.

Of the Symphonies composed by Leopold Mozart, it suffices for their commendation to say, that some of them have been attributed to his son. His *Method* for the violin is entitled "Versuch einer Grundlichen Violinschule," Augsburg, 1756, 4to., with a portrait of the author, and four plates representing the different positions for holding the bow and the violin. This work, composed according to the doctrine of Tartini, contains (says M. Fétis) some excellent things, and will always be read with profit by such violinists as are disposed to reflection on the subject of their art. The second edition, completed, appeared, under the title "Grundliche Violinschule," in 1770. A third edition was published in 1785. It has since been frequently reprinted, and translated into several languages.

William Cramer was a native of Mannheim, and born in the year 1730. Influenced by an early passion for music, and aided by the bounty of Prince Maximilian, he soon acquired excellence on his favourite instrument, and, at the age of twenty, obtained a situation in the chapel of the Elector Palatine. Not, however, receiving on the Continent encouragement commensurate with his continual and rapid improvement, he, in 1770, came to England, where he soon obtained the situations of Leader of the Opera-House band, and of the King's Concerts. In 1787, under John Bates, the Conductor, he led the performances given at Westminster Abbey in commemoration of Handel, and led them in a style that proved his thorough comprehension of the music of that great master. Though Cramer failed to obtain

in Germany sufficient patronage to induce his remaining in that country, his claims were admitted there by all real judges of executive talent; and in England he was esteemed the first violinist of his time. It used to be asserted of him that he joined the emphatical expression of Benda with the brilliancy of Lolli. The decision and spirit which characterized his playing, gave him great advantage as a leader.—The latter days of Cramer were somewhat clouded. The emoluments arising to him from the Opera House, and from his employment as a private teacher of the violin, had been considerable during many years; but talent is too frequently a bad economist, and his was one of the cases in which it proved so. The embarrassment he sustained in his affairs, and the transfer of the post of leader of the Opera-band to the greater Viotti, combined to exercise an injurious effect on his health and spirits. His death occurred in October 1799. Cramer was twice married, and had two sons by his first wife—John-Baptist the great *Pianiste*, and François, of whom presently.*

John Peter Salomon was born at Bonn, in 1745. Director, purveyor, composer and performer, he was one of those whom the musical historian must delight to honour. He was educated for the law; but the voice of music was too powerful within him to be restrained. While very young, he became a performer in the Electoral Chapel at Bonn. In 1781 he went to Paris, with

* Of *Tassenberg*, a fine player, who came over to England with William Cramer, little can be said. As he fell speedily into obscurity, I place him here below in a note. With capacity for achieving a position, but with no prudence for its retention, he endured much misery through his own reckless follies. To some one who was once enquiring where he *lived*, the reply was, "In and about the brick-kilns at Tothill-Fields."

a result of more fame than profit. His enterprising spirit, regulated by discretion, found a happier field in London, where his cheerful disposition, polished manners, good sense, and general attainments, soon obtained for him the friendship of all who at first patronized him for his professional talents. His concerts in 1791 form an epoch in musical history—for, to them we are indebted for the production of Haydn's twelve Grand Symphonies, known everywhere as "composed for Salomon's Concerts." Salomon had formed his project, and digested its details, in the previous year. In order to give every possible effect, as well as *éclat*, to his concerts, he determined to engage that "par nobile," Haydn and Mozart, not only to write exclusively for them, but to conduct their compositions in person. For this purpose he went to Vienna, where, after several interviews with both these great musicians, it was mutually agreed that Haydn should go to London the first season, and Mozart the next. They all dined together on the day fixed for the departure of the two travellers. Mozart attended them to the door of their carriage, wishing them every success, and repeating, as they drove off, his promise to complete his part of the agreement the following year. This, however, was an abortive hope. *L'homme propose, Dieu dispose:* —Mozart, who had filled a short life with durable deeds, was carried, within that stipulated interval, to the grave!—The terms on which Haydn undertook so long a journey and so responsible a duty, were, £300 for composing six grand Symphonies, £200 for the copyright of them, and a benefit, the profits guaranteed at £200. Salomon re-engaged Haydn for the season 1792, on the same terms, except that, for the copyright of the last six Symphonies, the increased sum of £300 was paid. In the first concert of this

year, Yaniewicz played a Violin Concerto. At the first of the series in 1793, Viotti made his début in London, in *his* favourite Violin Concerto. In 1794 and 95, Haydn, having visited London a second time, was again at the same post of pianoforte president. In 1796, Salomon's discriminating judgment brought out of obscurity, and placed in their proper sphere, the extraordinary vocal powers of Braham. Of Salomon's subsequent subscription concerts, engagements at private music parties, attendances at the Prince of Wales's Carlton-House Concerts, compositions of canzonets, songs, glees, &c. it is not requisite here to treat. His public career extended to the period of the formation of the Philharmonic Society, in 1813, of which he was one of the original and most zealous promoters and assistants. He died Nov. 28th, 1815. His remains, followed to the grave by a long train of professional and other friends, were interred in the great Cloister of Westminster Abbey.

Salomon was one of the few whose right to contend for the honour of being considered the greatest performer in Europe on the violin, was manifest. His taste, refinement, and enthusiasm, as Dr Burney has observed, were universally admitted. His profound knowledge of the musical art served to add solidity to his fame. His judgment and vigour, as a leader, are traditionally well known. Among his pupils, Pinto proved the extent of his master's skill, and his ability in communicating it. Unfortunately, this extraordinary young man, whose musical progress reflected so much honour on his teacher, possessed qualities that are but too frequently the regretted concomitants of genius; and he perished just as he was ripening into finished excellence. Salomon, besides other works, published two

Violin Concertos, arranged for the pianoforte, with full accompaniments; and six Solos for the violin, printed first in Paris, afterwards in London. Among his unpublished compositions, are some Violin Quartetts, Trios, and Concertos.

Charles Stamitz, eldest son of Stamitz the famous, was born at Mannheim, in 1746. He was made a violinist by his father, and his father's pupil, Cannabich; and was afterwards engaged in the chapel of a German Prince, till the year 1770, when he went to Paris, and made a durable impression there, both as a concerto-player on the violoncello and tenor, and as an instrumental composer. His writings had all the fire and spirit of those of his father, as well as an admixture of later improvements, without servility of imitation, as relating to *any* style. Many of them were published at Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam. This artist died at Jena, on his journey to Russia, in 1801.

John Frederick Eck, born at Mannheim, in 1766, became Concert Director to the Court of Munich. Noted as an artist in his day, he is further noted as having assisted to develop the great faculty of Louis Spohr.

Andreas and Bernard Romberg, cousins to each other, and scions of a family of some note in the annals of music, were for several years joint participants in labours connected, immediately or incidentally, with the violin. About the year 1790, the two cousins held situations in the court-chapel of the Elector of Cologne, at Bonn, where Andreas was already distinguished by his excellent performance on the violin, and his compositions, both vocal and instrumental; and Bernard no less for his violoncello-playing, and the pieces he had written, either for his own instrument, or the full orchestra*.

* Apropos of the violoncello—let us here bestow a passing

When the French armies entered Bonn, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, the Elector's musical establishment was broken up, and the two cousins proceeded to Hamburgh, where they readily obtained engagements in the orchestra of the German Theatre. In 1795, they left Hamburgh, and, continuing their mutually beneficial compact, made journeyings together through several cities of Germany and Italy, establishing everywhere the reputation of being among the best violin and violoncello players of the day. Their duetts and concertante performances, in particular, had that perfect harmony of finish which the constant habit of studying and playing *together* could perhaps alone bestow. The familiar interchange of ideas was likewise of advantage to them in the compositions which they produced, whether conjointly or separately. They may be styled, by no very forced parallel, the "Beaumont and Fletcher" of the musical world.

In 1797, they returned to Hamburgh, where Andreas remained; while Bernard, two years afterwards, made a separate excursion through England and Spain, to Lisbon, and, returning to Hamburgh about 1803, obtained subsequently a situation in the Royal Chapel at Berlin. Andreas had, in the mean time, turned his attention more

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glance on the name of *Merk*, distinguished more recently than that of Bernard Romberg, in connection with the larger instrument. Merk seems to have made a closer approach to our eminent Robert Lindley, in quality of taste, than in firmness of hand, or brilliancy of tone. Mr. Novello, who has rated him higher than any of our players, *except* Lindley, adds a remark with reference to the *double basses* used in Germany—that they have frequently, instead of *three* strings, a complement of *four*, thinner than those in use with us, and desending to E below the usual scale—and that, when mixed with other instruments of the same class, the depth and richness they produce are very fine.

extensively towards composition, and produced works involving larger combinations, and full orchestral agency, such as it is not requisite here to specify. Both the cousins, moreover, are *best* known as voluminous, and at one time highly popular, composers for their *own* particular instruments. Their chief instrumental works, as an English critic has remarked, will always be heard with pleasure, although without the excitement which attends Beethoven, or the deep admiration which waits upon Mozart. Of these works it may suffice here to enumerate :—

Four Concertos for the violin—two Quintetts—twenty-four Quartetts (comprised in eight sets)—a Quartett for the pianoforte and stringed instruments—nine Duetts—and a set of three Studios, or Sonatas for the violin—by *Andreas Romberg*.

A set of three Quartetts—four single Quartetts—a Trio for violin, tenor, and violoncello obligato, in F—six Concertos, and several Concertantes and Airs with Variations, for the violoncello —two Quartetts for pianoforte and stringed instruments—by *Bernard Romberg*.

François Cramer, second son of William Cramer, was born near Mannheim, in 1772. He commenced his labours on the violin under regular tuition, at a very tender age, and was no novice in the art of handling it, when, in his eighth year, he left his native country, to join his father and his brother John, who were settled in England. A long suspension of his practice, however, was rendered necessary by feeble health ; and the extent of delay prescribed by Horace with regard to a poem—"nonum prematur in annum"—was nearly enforced as to young Cramer's violin, which he had to keep in reserve during a lapse of seven years. On recommencing, he found himself under the disadvantage of having to toil over all the elementary ground anew. He did this, however, with good heart, and then worked

his way into close acquaintance with the Solos of Geminiani and Tartini, and the *Capriccios* of Benda and old Stamitz. At the age of seventeen, he was placed, as a gratuitous member, in the Opera band, by his father, who was its leader. In the course of a few years, he rose in the ranks of the orchestra, and was appointed principal second violin under his father, not only at the Opera, but at all the principal concerts, as the King's Concerts of Ancient Music, the Ladies' Concerts, and the great provincial musical festivals. On the death of his father, he was appointed leader of the Ancient Concerts, and came into very general employment as an orchestral leader, during many years—a position for which his steadiness of direction, and his solid style of playing, well qualified him. It was on his capacity as a leader, especially for the lofty music of Handel, that his fame rested. As a solo-player, he never had much importance—his powers of execution not being of the kind that ensures the uniform triumph over difficult passages.

Friedrich Ernst Fesca, born at Magdeburg, in 1789, was brought up in the midst of music, and took to the study of the violin in his ninth year, under M. Lohse, first violinist of the Magdeburg Theatre. Fesca made rapid progress, and was speedly delighted at being enabled to join in quartetts of Haydn, Boccherini and Mozart. In his eleventh year, he exhibited in a concerto on the violin, publicly, at Magdeburg. His first essay in composition was a concerto for the violin, performed by himself at Leipsic. Introduced by Marshal Victor to Jerome Buonaparte, he became first violinist at Cassel. His forte in instrumentalizing lay principally in the *adagio*, that true touchstone of a performer's abilities; and it was in giving effect to this that his inmost soul shone forth. His *compositions*, also,

showed superior delicacy in the adagio. Fesca afterwards became first violin of the Court Theatre at Carlsruhe, and at a later period was concert-master to the Grand Duke of Baden. He died in 1825, leaving a character highly esteemed and respected, especially for its exemption from the alloy of professional envy. He was distinguished in other compositions besides the instrumental. His quartetts possess great merit, but are by no means to be ranked with those of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. They are marked by grace and feeling, more than by invention.

Christoph Gottfried Kiesewetter was born in 1777, at Anspach, where his father was first violinist at the Royal Chapel. His own devotion to the instrument was repaid by the high reputation he acquired, rather than by pecuniary success;—for music in Germany, like virtue everywhere, is, in a certain qualified sense, its own reward. In that country, where the practice of the musical art is so extensively diffused, the individual professor has not the opportunity of rendering it so lucrative to himself, as it is where talent is concentrated among a very few of the community. Holding the appointment of leader of the band to the Hanoverian Court, Kiesewetter found himself too poor for the maintenance of a wife and eight children. In 1821, he came to London, and at once established a reputation here by his spirited playing at the Philharmonic Concerts. His execution was considered to be sometimes quite amazing, but not always perfect. It was particularly remarked that in quick playing he had a sort of jerking squeak in his high notes, that was somewhat anti-musical, and was one of the consequences of his too frequent use of the extra shifts. These squeaking notes, and marked slidings of the finger up the

strings, as it has justly been observed, may shew a certain kind of mechanical skill that partakes of the nature of practical wit, but they also betray the weaker part in the instrument, and are apt to be (except when *insured* by the skill of a Paganini) more provoking than pleasing. There existed a similar cause of deduction from the praise due to *another* German violinist, M. Hauman, who played at the Philharmonic in 1829. Kiesewetter, when in Germany, was fond of introducing Russian airs into his performances, which he did with happy effect. His action in playing was not graceful: this was probably to be attributed, in some degree, to the effect of a pulmonary complaint under which he suffered.

Mr. Gardiner has described the painful circumstances attendant on the last two performances of this accomplished artist, which took place at Leicester. On both occasions he was supported into the orchestra, and placed in a chair, by his brother professors,—his debility being so distressingly apparent that many persons apprehended he would expire in the room. The audience, with one voice, entreated that he would abandon the idea of playing; but he persisted; and though the withering hand of death had so visibly touched him, he had yet enough of energy remaining, to exhibit a few scintillations of his taste and style; but his fire and vigor were gone. He died in London, in September 1827, receiving unremitting attentions at the close of his career from his pupil, Oury. His death may be in some sort regarded as a loss to our English violinists —for the animation of his performance, beyond what is common either in his own country or here, afforded a useful example, which might have been prolonged with advantage.

Louis Spohr, the most highly gifted and accomplished of living German musicians, is the son of a physician at Seesen, in the Brunswick territory, where he was born in 1784. In his juvenile days, he was less forward in the exhibition of the musical faculty than has been the case with many whose powers, at maturity, have been far below his. The late Duke of Brunswick, however, who was himself a performer on the violin, interested himself in the success of young Spohr, and received him as a musician in the Chapel Royal. The Duke afterwards enabled him to accompany a distinguished player, Francis Eck, on a tour to Russia, by which means he acquired much important musical knowledge. On his return, he applied himself very closely to violin-practice, and then travelled through various parts of Germany, exciting enthusiasm by the fine qualities of his playing; for by that time he had already impressed on the instructions derived from his master the seal of his own organization and fine meditative powers. In 1805, he became concert-master, violinist, and composer, to the Duke of Saxe Gotha. In 1814, Spohr was in Vienna during the Congress, on which conspicuous occasion Rode and Mayseder had likewise resorted thither; and a story was current which represented each of these eminent performers as having played in succession, in a quartett of his own composition, at a private party, with the result of a unanimous preference for Mayseder, both as to the composition and the performance. This tale is not accredited by the judgment formed of the respective competitors by the public: and any belief of it must be greatly at the expense of the musical discernment among the "private party."—A tour through the principal Italian cities, where he gained general applause, occupied

Spohr in 1817; and he was subsequently director of the music at the Theatre of Frankfort-on-the-Main. In 1820, he was in England, exhibiting his admirable powers at the Philharmonic Concerts, where he introduced two fine symphonies and an overture, of his composition; but, neither here nor in France, which country he also visited, was he appreciated to the full extent of his merits. The cause of this has been well suggested by an able English critic, whose remarks, somewhat abridged, I here subjoin :—

"We had the traces, in Spohr's execution, of a mind continually turning towards refinement, and deserting strength for polish. His tone was pure and delicate, rather than remarkable for volume or richness; his taste was cultivated to the highest excess; and his execution was so finished, that it appeared to encroach, in a measure, upon the vigour of his performance. But he was very far from being deficient in the energy necessary to make a great player. The fact seems to be, that this quality, which for its inherent pre-eminence is most distinguishable in other violinists, was, in Spohr, cast into secondary importance, and rendered less discernible, by the predominating influence of his superior refinement. His delicacy was so beautiful, and so frequent an object of admiration, that his force was lowered in the comparison. And as it is frequently the consequence of a too subtle habit of refining to obliterate the stronger traces of sensibility, so his expression was more remarkable for polished elegance, than for those powerful and striking modifications of tone that are the offspring of intense feeling. It is probably owing to this softening-down of the bright and brilliant effects, that he failed (if such a man could be ever said to fail) in eliciting the stronger bursts of the public approbation

which attend those exhibitions of art that are directed against, and that reach, the affections of a mixed audience. Thus, though in the very first rank of his profession and of talent, Spohr perhaps excited a lower degree of interest than has frequently attended the performance of men whose excellences were far below standard. Such is the common fate of all extreme cultivation and polish. It transcends the judgment of the million. The Roman critics remarked the pre-eminent beauty with which Spohr enriched his playing, by a strict imitation of vocal effects. They said he was the finest *singer* upon the violin that ever appeared. This, perhaps, is the highest praise that can be bestowed. The nearer an instrument approaches the voice, the nearer is art to the attainment of its object."

In the autumn of 1839, Spohr was at the Norwich Musical Festival, where his appearance, after a lapse of sixteen years, excited much interest. He was then described as "a tall and stout man, with a noble head, a pleasing aspect, and a presence in which much simple dignity was engagingly blended with gentleness and modesty." His Violin Concerto, played on that occasion, was a newly-written work, exhibiting no mean share of his genius as a composer. It was remarked that in his playing he made no use of the more artificial resources of the modern school—not introducing into any of his highest flights a single "harmonic note," a single touch of the instrumental *falsetto*—but producing every note in those flights by fairly stopping the string, in perfect tune, and with the utmost purity of tone. Great command of the bow, and lively rapidity of fingering, were also obvious.

Broad and large in dimensions as in design, and marked by high creative genius, are some of the works

that illustrate the name of this potent artist—works that summon to their exposition vocal and instrumental *multitude:*—but these it is hardly requisite here to particularize. It more concerns me to state that, of his active and intelligent career, one of the best results has been the formation of many a well-trained pupil, now holding honorable position in this or that great city of Europe. The principles and details of his mode of instruction—so far as the breathing soul could convey them through the medium of inanimate paper—are found in his great didactic work, "*Der Violin-Schule*," published at Vienna by Haslinger, and subsequently translated into French. For the benefit of English students, a version, prepared by Mr. John Bishop, of Cheltenham, and bearing the author's own attestation of its fidelity, has been issued by Messrs. Robert Cocks and Co.

With reference to the violin-compositions of this great master, the following warm (and perhaps but little exaggerated) tribute has been rendered by a critic in the "Spectator:"—

"The writers of violin concertos are, for the most part, only known as such; but *Spohr's* compositions for his instrument display not only the brilliancy of their author's execution, but the elevated character of his mind: we listen not only to the principal performer with wonder, but to the whole composition with delight. They have a character of their own—unlike and *beyond* that of any similar productions of any age or country."

Charles William Ferdinand Guhr, "*Chef-d' Orchestre*" of the Theatre of Frankfort-on-the-Main, was born at Militsch, in Silesia, in 1787. His father, a singer at the principal church of that city, undertook the musical education of his son. At fourteen years of age,

Guhr entered, as a violinist, the chapel in which his father was employed. His youth, and want of experience in the art of writing, did not deter his ambition from composing many concertos, quatuors and other pieces for the violin. When he had attained the age of fifteen, his father sent him to Breslau, to continue his studies there, under the direction of the chapel-master, Schnabel, and the violinist, Janitschek. His progress was rapid, and he soon returned to Militsch. When Reuter took the direction of the theatre of Nuremberg, he placed Guhr in the post of *Chef-d'Orchestre*. His talents in the art of directing introduced in a short time considerable ameliorations into the state of music in that town. He performed several concertos of his own composition, and had some of his operas performed with success at the theatre. Having passed several years at Nuremberg, and having, while there, married Mademoiselle Epp, a singer at the theatre, Guhr accepted the direction of the music at the theatre of Wisbaden; but the war of 1815 having ruined this as a place of residence, Guhr went to Cassel, where the Prince named him director of the music of his chapel, as well as of the theatre. Vacating this post in the year following, he remained without employ up to the year 1821. At that period, an engagement for 22 years was offered him as director of the orchestra of the theatre at Frankfort-on-the Main, with a salary of 5,000 florins, which he accepted.

In Germany, M. Guhr was very advantageously known as a violinist; and he is said also to have possessed considerable skill on the piano. In the earlier steps of his progress on the violin, following the example of Rode, he aimed principally at precision and purity in his playing; but, after having heard Paganini, he en-

tirely changed his model, and made a special study of the peculiarities of that extraordinary man's execution. We are specially indebted to him for a work (already alluded to) on this subject, which was received with much interest; it is entitled "Ueber Paganini's Kunst, die Violine zu spielen."

Joseph Mayseder, a violinist of a high order, and, in a certain limited line, an original composer of acknowledged merit, acquired a considerable share of popularity in a comparatively short time. Residing principally at showy and dazzling Vienna, where the present musical taste does not conform, in point of solidity, to the accustomed German standard, he exercised the peculiarities of his style with unchecked freedom. As a composer, his ambition was generally to sparkle, and his habit was nearly all gaiety, or, as one of our musical critics has termed it, a tricksy *mixture* of gaiety and melancholy. His writings, full as they are of ingenuity, and containing much that cannot fail to please, are chargeable with a somewhat too flimsy character, and with too evident a tinge of what may be called the *coquetry* of composition. His playing, which was touched with the jerking manner observed in Kiesewetter, was also distinguished by much brilliancy and great powers of rapidity.

Bernhard Molique, Concert-master to the Court, and second leader of the orchestra to the Opera, at Stuttgard, was born at Nuremberg, Oct. 7, 1803. His father, a town musician, was his first master, and taught him to play, not one, but many instruments; the violin was, however, that which the young artist preferred, and on which his progress was most rapid. At the age of fourteen, he was sent to Munich, and placed under the direction of Rovelli, first Violin of the Chapel Royal. Two

years afterwards, he went to Vienna, where he obtained a place in the orchestra of the theatre "Au der Wien." In 1820, he returned to Munich, where, although but seventeen years of age, he succeeded his master, Rovelli, as First Violin to the Court. During the two subsequent years, Molique laboured to impart to his talent a graceful and energetic character. In 1822, he found himself sufficiently advanced in his art to be in a condition to travel, in the quality of artist, and give performances in great cities. He obtained leave of absence, and visited, with good success, Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, Hanover and Cassel.

In 1826, Molique was engaged at the Court of Stuttgard, as Concert-Master. There he obtained renown for the development of a new talent, the direction of an orchestra, in which post he was equally remarkable for precision, sentiment, and accurate appreciation of the slightest effects of instrumental colouring.

In 1836, M. Molique made a journey to Paris, and executed one of his concertos for the violin, at the Concerts of the *Conservatoire*. The journals which spoke of the effect of this composition, did justice to its beauty: but, according to their account, the execution does not appear to have produced upon the audience such an effect as ought to have resulted from the talent of the artist. It has been a subject of remark, that something of the same sort has happened in the case of most of the violinists of the German School who have performed before audiences at Paris; and that Spohr and Lipinski, who have had a great reputation elsewhere, produced but little sensation in that city. Must not the cause of this be sought in the diversity of national taste?—The published works of M. Molique have for many years contributed to the extension of his renown.

Vainly, oh, Pen! expectant here thou turn'st
To trace the doings of Teutonic Ernst—
To shew what praise he won, what hearts he moved,
What realms he traversed, and what trials proved.
Wanting the *records* that should speak his fame,
Prose fails—and Verse, alas! but gives *his name*.
So, in life's common round, when just aware
That one whom we have longed to *know*, is near—
To see him, hear him, *chat* with him, prepared,
We find he's gone, and has but *left his card!*

Under the German branch of our subject, as more analogous to that than to any one of the others, may perhaps be most fitly presented some particulars concerning the remarkable Norwegian artist, Ole (or Olaus) Bull, who, in 1836, came hither to dazzle and animate us, like a coruscation from those "northern lights" that are often so conspicuous in his own land. His advent to our shores was immediately preceded by a visit to our lively neighbours on the southern side of the Channel. The following sketch—of which the earlier and more picturesque portion is chiefly derived from a French account, written by a medical professor and musical amateur at Lyons—will furnish some idea of the powers and peculiarities of this individual.

It chanced, on a certain day, during the time when the cholera was ravaging the French capital, that one of the numerous diligences which were then wont to make their return-journey in an almost empty state, deposited, in the yard of a coach-office, a young northern traveller, who came, after the example of so many others, to seek his fortune at Paris. Scarcely arrived at his twentieth year, he had quitted his family, his studies, and Norway, the land of his home, to give himself wholly up to

a passion which had held sway within him from his infancy. The object of this pervading passion was music, and the violin. Deeply seated, active, and irresistible, the bias had seized him when he quitted his cradle, and had never ceased from its hold upon him. At six years old, he would repeat, on a little common fiddle bought at a fair, all the airs which he had heard sung around him, or played in the streets: and, two years afterwards, he had astonished a society of professional men, by playing at sight the first violin-part in a quartett of Pleyel's—though he had never taken a lesson in music, but had found out his way entirely alone! Destined afterwards by his family to the ecclesiastic life, and constrained to the studies which it imposes, he had still kept his thoughts fixed on his beloved violin, which was his friend, his companion, the central object of his attachment. At the instance of his father, the study of the law became subsequently his unwilling pursuit: and, at length, these struggles ended in his yielding to the impulse of his love for the violin, and banishing himself from Norway, in order to devote all his days to the cultivation of music.

In the midst of a mourning city—a mere atom in the region of a world—what is to become of the young artist? His imagination is rich, but his purse is meagre: his whole resource lies in his violin—and yet he has faith in it, even to the extent of looking for fortune and renown through its means. Friendless and patronless, he comes forward to be heard. At any other moment, his talent must have forced public attention in his behalf; but, in those days of desolation, when death was threatening every soul around, who could lend his ears to the charmer? The young artist is left alone in his misery —yet not quite alone, for his cherished violin remains

like a friend to console him. The cup of bitterness was soon, however, to be completely filled. One day, in returning to his miserable apartment in an obscure lodging-house, he found that the trunk, in which his last slender means were contained, had disappeared. He turned his eyes to the spot where he had placed his violin ..... it was gone! This climax of disaster was too much for the poor enthusiast, who wandered about for three days in the streets of Paris, a prey to want and despair, and then—threw himself into the Seine!

But the art which the young Norwegian was called to extend and to embellish, was not fated to sustain so deplorable a loss. The hand of some humane person rescued him from this situation. His next encounter seemed like *another* special interposition of Providence; for he became the object of benevolent attention to a mother who had just lost her son through the cholera, and who found in the young stranger so remarkable a resemblance to him, that she received him into her house, and, though possessed but of moderate means herself, furnished relief to his necessities. The cholera, in the mean time, ceased its ravages, and Paris resumed its habitual aspect. Supplied with bread and an asylum, and soon afterwards with the loan of a violin, Ole Bull was again enabled to gratify his devotion for music. By degrees his name began to be heard, and he arrived at some small reputation. Thus encouraged, he ventured the experiment of a Concert; and fortune smiled on him for the first time, for he gained 1200 francs—a large sum, considering the position in which he then was.

Possessed of this unexpected, and almost unhoped-for, little fortune, he set out for Switzerland, and went thence into Italy.

At Bologna, where his first *great* manifestation ap-

pears to have been made, he had tried vainly to obtain an introduction to the public, until accident accomplished what he had begun to despair of. Full of painful emotion at the chilling repression which his simple, inartificial, unfriended endeavours had been fated to meet with, he one day sat down with the resolution to compose something; and it was partly amidst a flow of obtrusive tears that his purpose was fulfilled. Taking up his instrument, he proceeded to try the effect of the ideas he had just called into life. At that moment, it chanced that Madame Rossini was passing by the house in which his humble apartment was situated. The impression made on her was such, that she spoke in emphatic terms upon it to the director of a Philharmonic Society, who was in a critical predicament, owing to some failure in a promise which had been made him by De Beriot, and the syren, Malibran. Madame Rossini's piece of intelligence was a burst of light for the "Manager in distress:" he had found his man. The artist was induced to play before the dilettanti of Bologna, and his success was complete.

At Lucca, Florence, Milan, Rome, and Venice, the impression he made was yet greater and more decisive. On each occasion, he was recalled several times before the audience, and always hailed with the utmost enthusiasm. At the Neapolitan theatre of *San Carlo*, he was summoned back by the public no less than nine times—thrice after the performance of his first piece, and six times at the end of the second. It was a perfect *furore*.

Our Norwegian artist now revisited Paris, under happier auspices. Welcomed and introduced with eager kindness by the composer of "Robert le Diable," he was several times listened to with delight on the stage of the

Opera, and obtained the greatest success that has been known since the displays made by Paganini.

Opinions were not agreed as to the extent to which Ole Bull was to be considered an imitator of Paganini. It appears certain that the example of the latter first led him to attempt the more strange and remote difficulties of the instrument. It was during the time of his distressed condition, that he found means to hear the great Italian artist, by actually selling his last shirt, with the produce of which he joined the crowd in the saloon of the French Opera. Every one around him, after the electrifying strains of the magical performer, was exclaiming that he had reached the farthest limits of what was possible on the violin. Ole Bull (says the writer of the French account), after applauding like the rest, retired in thoughtful mood, having just caught the notion that something beyond this was yet possible; nor did the idea cease to occupy his mind, but gathered fresh strength during his rambles in Switzerland and Italy, until it impelled him, at Trieste, to abandon the old track, and resign himself to the dictates of his own genius.

In justice to Paganini, it must never be forgotten that *he* was the first who, in modern days, conceived the principle of its being possible to extract a variety of *new effects* from the versatile instrument that had been supposed to have surrendered all its secrets to the great antecedent Masters; and that his practice lent marvellous illustration to what he proceeded, under that impulse, to explain;—nor does the supremacy of Paganini in the *nouveau genre*, for the reasons previously touched upon in these pages, seem likely to be seriously shaken by *any* who may seek the encounter of a comparison. It may certainly be averred, how-

ever, that, of all who have attempted to follow in the direction taken by the great Genoese genius, Ole Bull has been, owing to the fire and enthusiasm of his own temperament, decidedly the farthest removed from servility of imitation. It speaks much for the originality of the Norwegian artist, that, in the early practice of his instrument, instead of a fostering excitement, he had to encounter the decided opposition of adverse views; and, instead of the open aid of a master, had only for his guide the secret impulses of his own mind. On the whole, he must be acknowledged a man of fine genius, who forced his way through no common difficulties to a distinguished rank in the musical art, and who presents, to the contemplation of the persevering student, one of the most cheering of those examples which the history of human struggles in pursuit of some absorbing object is so useful to enforce. It must add not a little to our admiration of him, to find that, in the mysteries of composition, he has discovered and shaped his own course. The ingenuity of construction evident in the orchestral accompaniments to his pieces, would suggest a methodical study of the harmonic art: yet it was said, on the contrary, that he was quite unacquainted with even the elementary rules of that art; and that it would have puzzled him to tell the conventional name of any one chord. How then did he arrive at the power of writing music in parts? He opened a score, studied it, thought over it, made a relative examination of its parts after his own way, and then, setting to work, as the result of this progress, became a composer himself. In the character of his compositions, we may trace the effect of this unusual and (it must be confessed) somewhat too self-dependent "moyen de parvenir." They are impulsive and striking —enriched with occasional passages of fine instrumen-

tation, and touched with sweet visitations of melody—but they are deficient in coherence of structure, and in the comprehensiveness of a well-ordered design. They may serve as fresh examples to illustrate the old maxim—that genius itself cannot with safety neglect that ordinary discipline which gives familiarity with the rules and methods of art.

The most surprising thing (amounting indeed to an enigma), in connection with Ole Bull's powers of execution, was the very small amount of manual practice which he stated himself to have been in the habit of bestowing on the instrument—a thing quite at variance with all the received notions, as well as usage, on the subject. His labour was, it appears, in by far the greater part, that of the head; and a very limited application of the hands sufficed to "carry out" what he ex-cogitated—to work out his purposes and "foregone conclusions." It sounds nobly, as a proposition, that it is "the mind's eye," and not the blind gropings of practice, that should shew the violinist the way to greatness, and give him the knowledge which is power: but, alas! common natures—nay, all that are not marvellously *un*common—find it necessary to draw to the utmost on both these resources, and cannot spare their hands from the neck of the instrument. This comparatively trifling amount of manual cultivation, however, while it remains on the whole "a marvel and a mystery," may be accepted as a proof in itself of how little trick (setting aside his extravagant "quartett on *one* string") there was in Ole Bull's performance: for the successful display of tricks is essentially dependent on the most assiduous manipulation;—the *charlatanerie* of the instrument being the triumph of the hand, as distinguished from that of the mind. To particularize the various merits which

belong to his execution, would lead beyond the limit here proposed—else might his sweet and pure tone—his delicate harmonics—his frequent and winning *duplicity* of notes and shakes—his rapid and exact *staccato*, &c. be severally dwelt upon in terms of delight.—I cannot forbear referring, however, to the "ravishing division" of his consummate *arpeggios*, forming a finely regulated shower of notes, rich, round, and most distinct, although wrought out by such slight undulations of the bow, as to leave in something like a puzzle our notions of cause and consequence. To suit the wide range of effects which his fancy sometimes dictated, it appears (another marvel!) that he subjected his violin to some kind of *alterative* process; for which purpose he would open it (to use his own expression) like an oyster!

The manners and conversation of this young artist, at the time when he was exciting attention in England, bore an impress of genius which it was impossible to mistake; and his occasional sallies of enthusiasm served to impart an increased interest to the abiding modesty which tempered and dignified his character. In describing the state of his own mind, under the immediate domination of musical ideas, he pictured it under the forcible figure of an alternate heaven and hell; while he would speak of the object and intention of his playing as being to *raise a curtain*, for the admission of those around him, as participants in the mysteries open to himself. In his habits, he was very temperate—wisely avoiding to wear out, by artificial excitements, the spontaneous ardour of his eminently vital temperament.

All the ordinary arts and intrigues by which it is so common, and is sometimes thought so necessary, for men to seek professional advancement, seemed com-

pletely alien to the nature of this child of the north. In person, he was tall, with a spare but muscular figure, light hair, a pale countenance, and a quick, restless eye, which became extremely animated whilst he was in the act of playing. When I add that he entertained an invincible antipathy to *cats*—exhibiting unequivocal signs of distress whenever one of those sleek and sly animals was discovered in the social circle—I shall have furnished all the information I am able to give (his latter career being unknown to me) concerning a man well entitled to commemoration.

Before concluding this chapter, a few words of record are due to the two sons of one of the most gifted musicians of the present day. I allude to the associate brothers LABITSKY, who, after a training in the Musical Conservatory at Prague, and subsequent studies prosecuted at Leipsic, have become candidates for public favour in England, where (for the present, at least) they appear to be settled. Their first appeal to notice in this country took place at Her Majesty's Theatre, during the progress of the late Grand National Concerts. Their style is said to be characterized by firmness and evenness in the bowing, with a correspondent fulness and purity of intonation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL.

. . a *crescent*; and my auguring hope
Says it will come to the full.—SHAKSPEARE.

CLIMATE, and the national habits of life, have in England presented no light obstacles to the progress and well-being of the musical art, as collectively regarded. The fogs and lazy vapours that so oft obscure, in our dear country, the genial face of the sun, must needs check and chill our animal spirits, and beat back into the heart the feelings that else would seek fellowship with the ear, by uttering the language of sweet sounds. The eager pursuit of business, on the other hand—the continuity of *action*, rigorously self-imposed, in order to satisfy both our material wants and our ambition—leaves us little opportunity—even when our sky and our land are *not* mutually frowning and exchanging sullen looks—for the liberation and development of our half-stifled musical impulses. The consequence of this two-fold opposition is—in multitudinous instances—that the music which is *in* us, comes not *out*; and hence it happens that we are too often suspected, by foreigners, of organic deficiency in this matter, and too often induced to doubt of ourselves. With the

luxurious climate, however, and the leisurely life, that combine to make the people of *Italy* as vocal as grasshoppers, *we*, too, should burst forth into the raptures of song, and overflow with melodial honey;—*so* at least I venture to believe, when I think of our stock, actually *hived*, in the way of *glees* and *ballads*—a not contemptible little store.

In addition to the two sources of impediment just noticed, may we venture to glance at a third? There is another gloom, besides that of our skies, that has had its obstructive influence, and still, in *some* degree, retains it. England, happily for her own comfort, has now left far behind her those puritanic days wherein all persons who ministered to the *amusement* of their fellow-beings were stigmatized as the "*caterpillars* of a common-wealth," and found law and opinion alike arrayed against them;—but the spirit of Puritanism, once so tyrannically exclusive, has never since departed wholly from among us—and we have, to this day, many sincere and well-meaning compatriots, whose peculiar notions of what constitutes piety, lead them to look with distrust and suspicion upon all that is beautiful in Nature or in Art, and so, to consider musical talent rather as a snare to be shunned, than as a resource to be cherished. These movers-in-a-mist, and extra-burden-bearers, confounding into *one* the two ideas of cultivation and corruption, as if the terms were synonymous, refuse all countenance to music, as an *art*. Its secular forms, in particular, are their aversion; for they have a strong impression that music is then, *only*, in its right place, when directly employed in the service of the sanctuary. They discover, even in an *Oratorio*, copious matter for reprobation. They have no sympathy with the practice of the sweetly majestic Psalmist of Israel, who

brought together, to aid in the solemnities of public worship, all that was *best* in vocal and instrumental skill. Vociferated dissonance, exempt from rule, and from accompaniment, has *their* approval, far above any tempered and balanced harmony; because (as *they* persuade themselves) the one comes from the heart, and the other does *not*. To such persons, I can only (in the words of the Archbishop of Granada to Gil Blas) wish all happiness, and a little more *taste*—regretting that the influence of what I conceive to be their *mistake* should have helped, with the other cited causes, to lessen the diffusion among us of the most delightfully recreative of all the arts, which, thus discouraged, has been driven to become the spoiled favourite of the great and rich, instead of being the constant friend and solace of the whole community.

Adverting now specifically to the English School of the violin, I would remind the reader of what has been previously observed respecting the very low estimation in which that instrument was for some time held, after its first advent to this country. To raise it into favorable regard, and to stimulate the efforts of our native professors, successive importations of foreign talent (chiefly from Italy) were required, and supplied. Our debt of this kind to the Italians has been larger than that of our continental neighbours, either of France or of Germany. Indeed the very fact of our possessing a School of our own, in this branch of art, has, I believe, been commonly overlooked by the musical writers of the continent: nor is this very surprising, when it is considered how the great masters from Italy, taking the lead in concerts and public performances, became "the observed of all observers," and the sole marks, or at least the principal ones, for the pen of the writer. It may be

demonstrated, nevertheless, that we, too, as violinists, have our separate credit to assert for the past, and yet more for the present, though we may not aspire to an equal amount of merit, in this sense, with Germany or France. We have certainly not caught, so effectually as the French, the various dexterities and felicities of execution; but it is perhaps not too much to say that we possess more "capability" for the development of the graver and better sort of *expression*. Your Englishman, with all his lumpish partiality for beef and pudding, is generally allowed to be a being of profounder sensibilities than your Frenchman. He is a better recipient of the more intense emotions that lie within the province of the "king of instruments," although its more brilliant characteristics are less within his reach. The violin is a *shifting Proteus*, which accommodates itself to almost every kind and shade of emotion that may actuate the human mind: but then, the lighter emotions more frequently dispose us to seek the aid of music for their audible sign, than the graver ones: therefore your Frenchman, "toujours gai," is oftener impelled to practise the violin than your Briton; and therefore he becomes, after his own fashion, a better player. But, after all, those who would appreciate *all* the capabilities of the violin as an individual instrument, should watch its "quick denotements, working from the heart," under all manner of hands—Italian, German, French, English, Dutch, and the rest.

With regard to *compositions* for the instrument, generally, it must be admitted that those to which merit, as well as custom, has given the greatest currency in this country, have been of foreign production—chiefly Italian or German. Truth requires the acknowledgment, that in *this* matter we stand far from high in the scale of

national comparison. It is the remark of Burney, that, for more than half a century preceding the arrival of Giardini, the compositions of Corelli, Geminiani, Albinoni, Vivaldi, Tessarini, Veracini, and Tartini, supplied all our wants on the violin. Though somewhat poor in this point of view, we are, however, not destitute. Let us advert here to two instances only, that is to say, Boyce and Purcell. Dr. Boyce's "Twelve Sonatas, or Trios, for two Violins and a Bass," were longer and more generally purchased, performed, and admired (says Dr. Burney) than any productions of the kind in this kingdom, except those of Corelli. They were not only in constant use as chamber-music, in private concerts—for which they were originally designed—but in our theatres as act-tunes, and at the public gardens as favourite pieces, for many years.

"Purcell's Sonatas and Trios (observes Mr. Hogarth, in his 'Memoirs of the Musical Drama') belong to the same school as those of Corelli. The Trios of the great Italian composer were published in the same year, and could not have served as a model to Purcell, who, in acknowledging his obligation to 'the most famed Italian masters' in this species of composition, must have alluded to Torelli and Bassani, the latter of whom was Corelli's master. Purcell's Sonatas, in some respects, are even superior to those of the great Italian composer; for they contain movements which, in depth of learning and ingenuity of harmonical combination, without the least appearance of labour or restraint, surpass anything to be found in the works of Corelli: but Corelli had the advantage of being a great Violinist, while Purcell, who was not only no performer himself, but probably had never heard a great performer, had no means, except the perusal of Italian scores, of form-

ing an idea of the genius and powers of the instrument. This disadvantage prevented Purcell from striking out new and effective violin passages, and produced mechanical awkwardness, which a master of the instrument would have avoided: but it did not disable him from exhibiting taste and fancy; and every admirer of the works of Corelli will take pleasure in these Sonatas of Purcell."

The first Englishman who seems to have attained distinction as a professional Violinist, was JOHN BANISTER, successor of Baltzar, the Lubecker, in the conduct of Charles the Second's new band of twenty-four violins. DAVIS MELL, the clock-maker, should, however, if we are to "keep time," be first introduced, since, although but an Amateur, he was an eminent hand at the violin, and was an agent of some little importance in the diffusion of a taste for the instrument, ere it had yet struggled into general notice. The merits of Davis Mell may be best described in the language of an already familiar friend, honest Anthony Wood:—

"In the latter end of this yeare (1657), Davis Mell, the most eminent Violinist of London, being in Oxon, Peter Pett, Will. Bull, Ken. Digby, and others of Allsowles, as also A. W. (Anthony à Wood) did give him a very handsome entertainment in the Tavern cal'd The Salutation, in St. Marie's Parish, Oxon, own'd by Tho. Wood, son of —— Wood of Oxon, sometimes servant to the father of A. W. The company did look upon Mr. Mell to have a prodigious hand on the Violin, and they thought that no person (as all in London did) could goe beyond him. But when Tho. Baltzar, an outlander, came to Oxon in the next yeare, they had other thoughts of Mr. Mell, who tho' he play'd farr sweeter than Baltzar, yet Baltzar's hand was more

quick, and could run it insensibly to the end of the finger-board."* And in another place, the same writer says, "After Baltzar came into England, and shew'd his most wonderful parts on that instrument, Mell was not so admired; yet he play'd sweeter, was a well-bred gentleman, and not given to excessive drinking, as Baltzar was."

It is worthy of notice that in the year of that event (the Restoration) which proved so favourable to the march of fiddling in this country, there was published by John Jenkins (who had been a voluminous composer of *fancies* for viols) a set of twelve sonatas for two violins and a bass, professedly in imitation of the Italian style, and the first of the kind which had ever been produced by an Englishman. "It was at this time" (observes Burney) "an instance of great condescension for a musician of *character* to write expressly for so ribald and vulgar an instrument as the *violin* was accounted by the lovers of lutes, guitars, and all the *fretful* tribe." This John Jenkins is designated by Wood as a little man with a great soul. He died in 1678.

John Banister was the son of one of the *waits* of the parish of St. Giles; yet, under this humble condition, he was enabled, by obtaining the rude commencement of a musical education from his father, to work his entrance into a successful career. He manifested, in a short time, such ability on the violin, as to gain the marked encouragement of being sent into France by our vivacious Charles II, for improvement, and of being appointed, on his return, leader of the royal band. From this service he was dismissed, for an offence of

* Life of Anthony à Wood, Oxford, 1772, p. 88, &c.

the tongue, such as the French partialities of the English King could not brook. He had ventured to tell Charles that the English performers on the violin were superior to those of France. Pity that a potentate so expert at a *jest* could not (or would not) find one wherewith to excuse the frankness of his man-in-office! Banister was one of the first who established lucrative concerts in London. In the announcement of one of these (in 1677), it is stated that the musical performance will begin "with the parley of instruments, composed by Mr. Banister, and performed by eminent masters." Banister died in 1679, and was interred in the cloister of Westminster Abbey. A contemporary, of some celebrity for his musical zeal, the Hon. Mr. North, has made a flattering allusion to this individual:—"It would be endless to mention all the elegant graces, vocal and instrumental, which are taught by the Italian Masters, and perhaps outdone by the English Banister."

John Banister, Jun. son of the preceding artist, and trained by his father to his own profession, obtained a post as one of King William's band, and also played the first violin at Drury Lane, when operas were first performed there. In this latter post he continued for a number of years, and was succeeded in it by Carbonelli. He was the composer of several *grounds with divisions*, inserted in the publication called the "Division Violin:" and a collection of music for the instrument, jointly written by himself and the German, Godfrey Finger, was published by him, and sold at his house in Brownlow-street, Drury Lane. This Banister died about the year 1729.

Obadiah Shuttleworth, organist of St. Michael's, Cornhill, and afterwards of the Temple Church, manifested such powers on the violin as to be ranked among

the first performers of his day. He was the son of a person who lived in Spitalfields, and who had acquired a small fortune, partly by teaching the harpsichord, and partly by copying Corelli's music for sale, before it was *printed* in England. Shuttleworth was the leader at the Swan Concert in Cornhill, from the time of its institution till his death, about the year 1735. He was likewise a respectable composer, and produced twelve concertos and several sonatas, for violins. Of his compositions, however, if any are now extant in print, they are only two of the concertos, which were formed from the first and eleventh solos of Corelli.

Henry Eccles, an English Violinist of considerable eminence, dedicated himself to foreign service, owing either to the want of due encouragement in his native country, or to the disappointment of expectations too loftily pitched. He went to Paris, and succeeded in attaching himself to the band of the King of France. His father, Solomon, had been also a professor of the instrument, and had some hand in the second part of the "Division Violin," published in London, 1693. Henry Eccles was the composer of twelve esteemed Violin Solos, published at Paris in 1720.

In treating of the progress of the violin in England, let us here again refer to the great name of Purcell. The colouring and effects of an orchestra, as Dr. Burney has remarked, were but little known in Purcell's time, yet he employed them more than his predecessors; and, in his sonatas, he surpassed whatever our country had produced or imported before. The chief part of his instrumental music for the theatre is included in a publication which appeared in 1697, two years after his death, under the title of "A Collection of Ayres composed for the Theatre, &c." These airs were in four

parts, for two violins, tenor and bass, and were in continual requisition as overture and act-tunes, till they were superseded by Handel's hautbois Concertos, as were those also by his overtures, while Boyce's Sonatas and Arne's compositions served as act-tunes*. Purcell lived, however, somewhat too early, or died too young, for the attainment, even by *his* genius, of any very high success in instrumental composition. Bassani and Torelli, or others inferior to them, formed his models of imitation for violin-music—the works of Corelli being hardly then known in this country; and indeed he was so imperfectly acquainted with the extensive powers of the violin, as to have given occasion to Dr. Burney to remark that he had scarcely ever seen a becoming passage for that instrument in any of his (Purcell's) works. His Sonatas, which contain many ingenious, and, at the time when they were composed, *new* traits of melody and modulation, must yet be admitted to discover no great knowledge of the bow, or of the peculiar genius of the instrument; and, if they are compared with the productions of his contemporary, Corelli, they will hardly escape being characterized as barbarous. This,

* In process of time, these compositions likewise were supplanted by Martini's Concertos and Sonatas, which, in their turn, were abandoned for the Symphonies of Van Malder, and the sonatas of the elder Stamitz. Afterwards, the trios of Campioni, Zanetti, and Abel came into play, and then the symphonies of Stamitz, Canabich, Holtzbauer, and other Germans, with those of Abel, Bach, and Giardini; which, having done their duty, "slept with their fathers," and gave way to those of Vanhall, Pleyel, and Boccherini; and all have now gradually sunk into insignificance, eclipsed by the superior brightness and grandeur of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cherubini, and some others, whose symphonies are the delight and wonder of the existing generation. So runs the changeful course of musical success!

the substance of Burney's remarks on this matter, though according somewhat fainter praise to Purcell than is assigned to him by Mr. Hogarth, does not seem to differ much from the latter, in the essential points.

The arrival of Geminiani and Veracini, which took place in 1714, formed the commencement of an important epoch in the progress of the violin in England. The abilities of those eminent foreign masters established them as models for the study of our own artists, and confirmed the sovereignty of the instrument over all others, in our theatres and concerts. The next English performer to be noticed is—

William Corbett, a member of the King's band, and a violinist of celebrity, who was the leader of the first Opera orchestra in the Haymarket, at the time when "Arsinoe" was performed there. In the year 1710, when the Italian Opera, properly so called, was established (with "Rinaldo" for its initiatory piece), a set of instrumental performers were expressly introduced, and Corbett, though in the service of the King, was permitted to go abroad. Visiting Rome, where he resided many years, he made a valuable collection of music and musical instruments. Some persons, professing to be acquainted with his circumstances, and fidgetting themselves to account for his being able to lay out such sums as he was observed to do, in the purchase of books and instruments, asserted pretty roundly that he had an allowance from Government, besides his salary, with the commission to watch the motions of the Pretender! This anxiety to construe fiddling into politics, and to find the heart of a state-mystery in the head of a violinist, is of a piece with what has been already related as to Rode and Viotti.—Returning from Italy about the year 1740, Corbett brought over with him a great quantity

of music which he had composed abroad. Full of ambition to print, and desire to profit, he issued proposals for publishing by subscription a work entitled "Concertos, or universal *Bizarreries*, composed on all the new *gustos*, during many years' residence in Italy." This strange medley he dragged into publication; but buyers were few and shy. It was in three books, containing thirty-five Concertos of seven parts, in which he professed to have imitated the style of the various kingdoms in Europe, and of several cities and provinces in Italy. In his earlier days, before he left England, he published, in a soberer vein, two or three sets of *Sonatas for Violins and Flutes*,—twelve *Concertos for all Instruments*, and several sets of what were called *Tunes for the Plays*. Corbett died, at an advanced age, in the year 1748, bequeathing by his will the best of his instruments to Gresham College, with a salary of ten pounds a-year to a female servant, who was to act in the demonstrative character. Her expositions of the merits of this collection, are not to be confounded with the "Gresham Lectures."

Michael Christian Festing, performer and composer, but coming short of the summit in either capacity, was, I believe, of German birth, but nurtured to his art in England, under the direction of Geminiani. He filled the place of first violin at a musical meeting called the *Philharmonic Society*, and chiefly composed of noblemen and gentlemen performers, who met on Wednesday nights, during the winter season, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand. On the building of the Rotunda in Ranelagh Gardens, he was appointed sole conductor of the musical performances there. By his zeal and indefatigable exertion, he also contributed very essentially to the establishment of the *fund* instituted for the support of decayed musicians and their families;

and for several years discharged, without any remuneration, the office of secretary to that excellent institution. Its rise occurred in the year 1738, from the following circumstance. Festing, happening to be seated one day at the window of the Orange Coffee-House, at the corner of the Haymarket, observed, in the act of driving an ass, and selling brick-dust, a boy whose intelligent countenance, contrasting with the humility of his rags, strongly excited his interest. On enquiry, the lad was found to be the son of a *musician*, who had fallen under the blight of adversity. Struck with sorrow and mortification that the object before him should be the child of a brother-professor, Festing determined to attempt some plan for his support. In this worthy purpose he was assisted by Dr. Maurice Greene—and from this germ of benevolence, sprang eventually the enlarged and estimable charity which has since flourished from season to season.

Inferior, as a performer on the violin, to several others of his time, Festing had nevertheless sufficient talent, in association with gentlemanly manners and conduct, to obtain considerable influence in the musical profession, and to derive an ample and constant support from the patrons of the art among the nobility. Though not eminent as a composer, he has shewn some merit in his *solos*, and a very fair understanding of the nature and resources of the instrument. These solos are but little known, having been originally sold only by private subscription. Festing died in 1752. He was succeeded at Ranelagh, and at some of the Concerts, by Abraham Brown, a performer who had a clear, sprightly, and loud tone, but had no sense of expression.

Thomas Pinto, who attained the honor of dividing with Giardini the leadership of the band at the King's

Theatre, was born in England, of Italian parents. His early genius for the Violin was so well directed as to render his playing, as a boy, a theme of astonishment; and, long before he was of age, he was employed as the leader of large bands at Concerts. At this time, however, he fell into a train of idle habits, and began to affect the fine gentleman rather than the musical student —keeping a horse, and sporting a special pair of boots, as his custom of a morning, while a switch in his hand displaced the forgotten fiddle-stick. From this devious course he was reclaimed by the accident of the arrival of Giardini, whose superiority to all the performers he had ever heard, inclined him to think it necessary that he should himself recur to practice; and this he did, for some time, with great diligence. A very powerful hand, and a wonderfully quick eye, were the masterly possessions of Pinto, and enabled him to perform the most difficult music at sight. He played thus, indeed, with more advantage than after studying his subject; for then, in his carelessness, he would trust to his memory, and frequently commit mistakes — missing the expression of passages, which, if he had thought them worth looking at, he would have executed with certainty. After leading at the Italian Opera whenever Giardini's more extensive avocations caused him to lay down the truncheon, Pinto was engaged as First Violin at Drury-Lane Theatre, where he led for many years. On the death of his first wife, Sybilla, a German singer, he married another singer, Miss Brent (the celebrated pupil of Dr. Arne), and settled in Ireland, where he died in the year 1773.

Matthew Dubourg, recorded to have been one of the most eminent of the race of English Violinists, was born in the year 1703, and gave very early evidence of

his musical propensities. It does not appear from whom he derived his first instructions on the instrument; but, when quite a child, he played his first solo (a sonata of Corelli's) at one of the concerts of the eccentric Britton, the musical small-coal man. To make his infantine person sufficiently visible on that occasion, he was made to borrow elevation from a joint-stool; and so much was the "tender juvenal" alarmed at the sight of the splendid audience assembled for music and coffee in Britton's dingy apartment, that at first he was near falling to the ground, from dismay. When about eleven years of age, he was placed under the tuition of Geminiani, who was then recently arrived in this country; and, thus tutored, he was enabled fully to confirm the promise which his first attempts had exhibited. At the age of twelve, he was again before the public—having a benefit concert at what was called the Great Room in James Street. Before he had completed his seventeenth year, he had acquired sufficient power and steadiness to lead at several of the public concerts; the fulness of his tone, and the spirit of his execution, being generally noticed. A few years more sufficed to establish thoroughly his reputation; and, in 1728, he was honoured with the appointment of Master and Composer of the State-Music in Ireland. This situation had been previously offered to his late preceptor, Geminiani, and by him declined on account of its not being tenable, in those jealously restrictive days, by a member of the Romish Communion. As the duties of this employment did not require Dubourg's constant residence in Ireland, he passed much of his time in England, where he was chosen instructor in music to the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, and other amateurs, whose names might belong to a "Dictionary of Etiquette." On the death of Festing,

in 1752, he was appointed Leader of the King's Band, which situation, together with his Irish post, he was so far a musical *pluralist* as to retain until his death, which occurred in London in the year 1767. As a member of society, according to the testimony about him which remains, few men of his profession have rendered themselves more generally respected than *he* did.

A considerable share of originality appears to have marked the style of this artist, who, if he derived essential aid from the great man that called him pupil, was any thing but his slavish imitator. "Dubourg's performance on the violin," says Sir John Hawkins, "was very bold and rapid — greatly different from that of Geminiani, which was tender and pathetic ;—and these qualities, it seems, he was able to communicate ; for Clegg, his disciple, possessed them in as great perfection as himself." According to the same authority, the talent of Dubourg won for him many admirers, and among them a Mrs. Martin, who had become, from a Dutch widow, an English wife, and, being possessed of a large fortune, came to reside in London, where, during the winter season, she had frequent Concerts, resorted to by citizens of the first rank, and at times by some of the nobility. A picture of Dubourg, painted when he was a boy, was, it seems, a conspicuous object in Mrs. Martin's Concert-Room*.

As a composer, Dubourg is, or rather was, known by the *odes* he officially set to music in Ireland, and by a great number of *solos* and *concertos* for the violin, which

* As a grandson of the individual here recorded, the writer of these pages may perhaps find licence to mention that there is extant in his family a fine portrait of Dubourg, by the Dutch painter Vander Smissen, interesting for the qualities of intelligence and good-humour that are blended in its expression.

he wrote for his own public performances. Though alleged to have possessed much intrinsic merit, none of these appear hitherto to have been printed; nor is it likely that they will ever now meet with that honour, as the change of fashion in music would hardly admit of their being rescued from "the dreary *fuimus* of all things human." For a long time, however, his works (in their aforesaid manuscript state) continued in the possession of one of his pupils; and perhaps they are not yet scattered, but may be at this moment reposing in some dark old chest, undisturbed, save by the nibblings of the worms. In the faint hope of yet bringing some of them to the light, although with no view towards their multiplication, I have had recourse (but without success) to the friendly aid of that oft-times efficacious doubt-cleaver and knot-cracker, known by the name of "Notes and Queries." As to the *odes* above referred to, they were *ex-officio* celebrations of royal virtue, from the now-forgotten hand of Benjamin Victor, the poet-laureate, who has achieved for himself *no* realization of the classic wish, "victorque virûm volitare per ora." Of several of these stately effusions, I have the words now before me. They might serve to provoke the smiles of another and a very different laureate, the living Tennyson; but, as a stimulus to *music*, I can say nothing for them — and can only *hope* that my progenitor's attempts, in association with them, may have been worthy of better company.

While in Ireland, Dubourg was honoured with the intimacy of Pope's *Giant*, the Briarean Handel; and an anecdote, in which they are both concerned, serves to shew, amusingly enough, that tendency to *expatiate* discursively on their own peculiar instrument, by which most performers of eminence are distinguished. Handel,

in a spirit of charity that harmonized fortunately with his interest, but is not to be suspected of being on that account the less sincere, commenced his career in Ireland by presiding at the performance of the *Messiah*, for the benefit of the Dublin City-Prison. On a subsequent evening, Dubourg, as leader of the band, having a *close* to make *ad libitum*, wandered about so long, in a fit of abstract modulation, as to seem a little uncertain about that indispensable postulate, the original key. At length, however, he accomplished a safe arrival at the *shake* which was to terminate this long close, when Handel, to the great delight of the audience, cried out, loud enough to be heard in the remotest parts of the theatre—"Welcome home, welcome home, Mr. Dubourg!" One of the evidences of Handel's friendship for him, is to be found among his testamentary arrangements, which included a bequest of £100 in his favour.

During his location in Ireland, Dubourg was also visited (in 1761) by his master Geminiani, towards whom he always evinced the utmost regard, and who died in his house, at the great age of 96.

Garrett, Earl of Mornington, noted for his fine musical taste, no less than for his lineal antecedence to the Duke of Wellington, took the interest of a patron in this modest man of art, of whose ability he shewed a precocious discernment, in his very infancy—as the following little tale will explain.

The father of the Earl played well, as an amateur, on the violin, so as to give frequent delight to his child, whilst in the nurse's arms, and long before he could speak. Dubourg, happening on some occasion to be at the family seat, was not permitted by the child to take the violin from his father; nor was the opposition overcome till his little hands were held. After having heard

Dubourg, however, the case was altered, and there was then much *more* difficulty in persuading him to let Dubourg give the instrument back to his father; nor would the infant ever afterwards permit the father to play, whilst Dubourg was in the house.

It appears that the name of this artist is the first on record in connection with the performance of a *violin concerto* on the stage of an English theatre. At the oratorios given by Handel at Covent Garden in 1741 and 42, Dubourg occupied the ears and eyes of the public, in that way, for many successive nights. Several other performers took the hint, and started upon the same footing soon after*. This sort of exhibition, after some years, seems to have grown too common, to satisfy the public appetency; wherefore a Signor Rossignol, in 1776, undertook to perform after a mode which we should now style *à la Paganini:* indeed he seemed to go beyond the modern "miracle of man," for he advertised "a concerto on the violin, *without strings*." Whether the joke turned on the plural number, in particular, or (as the lawyers say) how otherwise, it is now impossible to ascertain.

Dubourg—peace to his gentle memory!—was interred in the church-yard of Paddington, where his calling in life, and his summons to death, were denoted in the following gracefully reflective epitaph:—

> "Though, sweet as Orpheus, thou couldst bring
> Soft pleadings from the trembling string,
> Uncharmed the King of Terror stands,
> Nor owns the magic of thy hands."

John Clegg, a name as closely linked to misery as to talent, was, as already observed, a pupil of the last-

* Vide "Records of a Stage Veteran," in the New Monthly Magazine.

named professor. He also travelled with Lord Ferrers into Italy, and much advanced his taste during his stay in that special home of the violin.

Castrucci, leader of the Opera-band in London during the early part of the last century, growing old, and losing much of his former vigour of execution, Handel, then at the head of the management, was desirous of placing Clegg in his station: but, knowing Castrucci to be in no exalted circumstances, and not wishing to wound his feelings, by making the intended change, without convincing him of his insufficiency, he adopted the following method for effecting his object:—He composed a violin concerto, in which the concertino (or second) part was purposely made as difficult of execution as the first. This piece he gave to Clegg, to be performed by him, accompanied by Castrucci; when the former executed his part with grace and facility, while the latter laboured through *his* portion of the performance, in a lame and imperfect manner. Castrucci, backward as he had been to admit the rival pretensions of Clegg, was constrained to yield to him the palm of victory; and Handel obtained his wish—but nevertheless retained Castrucci in the band, and was otherwise his friend, in subsequent days.

The beauty of Clegg's tone, and the graces of his execution, won for him many admirers as a performer; but, alas! he purchased at far too dear a sacrifice the fame for which he strove. About the year 1742, he had so deranged his faculties by intense study and practice, that it became necessary to confine him in Bedlam. There, during lucid intervals, he was allowed the use of his instrument; and it was long an *amusement*, as fashionable as it was inhuman, to visit him, among other lunatics, in the hope of encountering him at some

moment of security from his "battle of the brain," in order to be entertained, either by his fiddle, or his folly! Barbarity like this has now happily ceased to disgrace the movements of fashion, and only leaves a feeling of *wonder*, to qualify the indignation which its remembrance excites.

Thomas Collet, of eccentric memory, enjoyed the reputation of being one of our principal native performers about the year 1745, when he led the orchestra of Vauxhall Gardens; an appointment then more highly considered than in these days. Possessing very little, however, either of taste or of musical knowledge, he was always an inelegant player, and owed his success to his powers of execution alone; yet *these* must have been exerted within a very confined compass, for Parke, in his "Musical Memoirs," asserts Collet to have had such an aversion to *playing high*, that he dismissed one of his violin-performers for flourishing on the *half-shift!* Parke has added an anecdote about him, which must be confessed to savour not a little of the marvellous. "Although this gentleman, who was a great pigeon-fancier (continues Parke), did not go aloft on the *fiddle*, he went every day up to the top of his *house*, to see his pigeons fly; and on one occasion he was so lost in admiration of them, that, while clapping his hands and walking backwards, he walked over the leads of the house, and in the fall must have been dashed to pieces; had not his clothes been caught by a lamp-iron, to which he remained suspended (more frightened than hurt) until taken down by the passers-by."

Francis Hackwood, whose convivial and entertaining qualities assisted his professional talent, in procuring for him the notice and support of the most influential among the patrons of music, was born in

1734. He attained some distinction among violin-performers; but the play of his wit and humour seems to have outlasted that of his instrument, in the impression produced—and no wonder, considering how much farther *wit* can be transmitted, than *sound*. It is one of the anecdotes related of this artist, that, at the conclusion of an Evening Concert given by Lord Hampden to a large assemblage of rank and fashion, when the performers had been taxed to exert themselves till a most unreasonable hour in the morning, his Lordship addressed to him the question, "Hackwood, will you stay and *sup* with us?"—and that the answer was, "No, my Lord, I can't; for I think (taking out his watch) my wife must be waiting *breakfast* for me."—In another anecdote, Hackwood figures as the *cause* of a jest, which is the next good thing to being its utterer. He was intimate with the late Sir C———r W———e, a Lincolnshire Baronet of large fortune, who, when not laid up by the gout, was a man of three-bottle capacity. At a gentlemen's party given by this free votary of the grape, Hackwood, who had some pressing business to transact early in the ensuing day, and had heard the clock strike *one*, arose to depart. "Where are you going so soon?" inquired Sir C———r. "Home, Sir," replied Hackwood; "it has struck one."—"*One!*" exclaimed the Baronet; "pooh, pooh! Sit down, sit down! What's *one*, among *so many?*"—Parke, the oboist, who gives this story, spoils the close of it by a bottle of Hollands gin, which he makes the two interlocutors to have drunk out between them, on the stairs, *pour prendre congé*. The gin lends no genuine spirit to the anecdote, and had better have been omitted by the narrator, who, besides, was probably in error as to its existence at all in the case. The man who, flushed with generous

wine, has succeeded in saying a tolerably good thing, may fairly be considered as too *happy*, to be in any need of such extra stimulus as half a bottle of gin. Potation of *that* character is the resource of the *dull*. Parke has alluded generally, in no liberal temper, to the eccentricities of this professor, whose disposition he has mistaken, when attributing *meanness* to it. This charge he founds particularly on the fact of Hackwood's having once shouldered his own violoncello (for he played that instrument also) on his way home from Apsley-House, to save expense of coach or porter, though he was himself attired "in an elegant suit of blue silk and silver." Those who knew him better, could have furnished his detractor with a fairer reason for the proceeding in question, by suggesting that it arose from that anxious care for the safety of his instrument, which many a performer is well known to entertain, and which, in the instance of the individual now under notice, prevailed to such an extent as even to form one of his eccentricities. So far, indeed, from being of an illiberal spirit, he was a considerable loser by the too ready advance of money to the necessitous.

Hackwood lived till 1821, and was for some years *father* (as the term goes) of the Royal Society of Musicians.

It may be incidentally mentioned that a great benefit to our English performers on bow-stirred instruments in general, was produced by Abel's residence here for about a quarter of a century. That fine musician and performer, the pupil and friend of Sebastian Bach, though he handled an instrument (the *viol-da-gamba*) of a species which was not in common use, and was even about to be completely laid aside, became nevertheless the model, in adagio-playing, of all our

young professors on bowed instruments, who, taught by his discretion, taste, and pathetic manner of *expressing a few notes*, became more sparing of notes in a *cantabile*, and less inclined to attempt such flourishes as have no higher purpose than to display mechanical readiness. The wonders achieved by Abel in the extraction of tone from an instrument which, albeit possessed of some sweetness, was radically so crude and nasal, as the viol-da-gamba (that remnant of the old "chest of viols"), are something truly memorable among the triumphs of art. The Robert Lindley of our own day and country, transcendant in the quality of tone which he could elicit, stands a minor marvel, as compared in this sense with Abel,—*his* instrument being one that is naturally so much more grateful and practicable.

Richard Cudmore, a native of Chichester, was born in 1787. His success began with his juvenile days, for he performed a solo in public when only nine years old; and at eleven, with still higher ambition, he played a concerto at Chichester, composed by himself! Such a thing is of course only marvellous with reference to the means which it is possible for a child to possess: accordingly, on these occasions, there is always "a liberal discount allowed"—the indulgent auditor forming his estimate on the Horatian plan of "contentus parvo." At twelve years of age, young Cudmore attained the provincial triumph of leading the band at the Chichester Theatre—played a concerto for the comic actor, Suett, at his benefit—and performed a *violino primo* part amongst the "older strengths" of the Italian Opera-band in London. In the mean time he was introduced to Salomon, and had the advantage of some training from that noted Master. After the

subsequent enjoyment of some years of country fame, Cudmore changed the scene of his operations to London, and, giving scope to the versatility of his talent, became a pupil of Woelfl's on the pianoforte, and, in the sequel, a public performer on that instrument also.—A striking proof of his musical ability is shewn in an anecdote recorded of him. On one occasion a performance took place at Rowland Hill's Chapel, in Blackfriars Road, for which Salomon had rehearsed, in conjunction with Dr. Crotch and Jacobs. Salomon, however, being unexpectedly subpœnaed on a trial, requested Cudmore to become his substitute at the chapel, when he performed the music at sight, before from two to three thousand persons.—Another extraordinary instance of his skill in sight-playing, or what the French call *l'exécution à livre ouvert*, was given in a private concert at Mr. C. Nicholson's, where he executed at sight a new and difficult manuscript concerto, which was accidentally brought thither.

At Liverpool, where he occasionally conducted the public concerts, he once performed a concerto on the violin by Rode; one on the piano by Kalkbrenner; and a third, by Cervetto, on the violoncello! At a later period, he became leader of the band at the establishment called the Manchester Amateur Concert.

G. F. Pinto, grandson of the performer of that name already noticed (whose ardent temperament he seems to have inherited, with no countervailing discretion), affords a remarkable instance of premature musical genius. He studied the violin under Salomon and Viotti, and, at fifteen years of age, had attained such accomplishment on that instrument, that he could lead an orchestra, in the performance of the symphonies of Haydn, with no very discernible inferiority to Salomon. He became

also a proficient on the pianoforte, and evinced good knowledge of counterpoint, in several vocal publications of merit and originality, which he sent forth when about the age of seventeen. The syren voice of Pleasure, however, lured this promising genius to his destruction. Possessed of a fine person, and a mischievous store of vanity, he became a martyr to dissipation about the year 1808, before he had completed his twenty-first year.

Thomas Linley (Junior), eldest son of the vocal composer of that name, was born at Bath, in 1756, and displayed, at a very early age, extraordinary powers on the violin—performing a concerto in public when but eight years old. To qualify him more effectually for a musical career, through a due acquaintance with theory, his father placed him under the able tuition of Dr. Boyce; after which he was sent to Florence, chiefly to prosecute the study of his favourite instrument, under the eye of Nardini. Through the kind agency of the Italian violinist, Linley acquired the advantageous friendship of Mozart, then a youth of about his own age. On his return from his studies on the continent, young Linley repaired to Bath, to lead his father's concerts and oratorios, which he did with such precision and animation as to gain high credit. His manner of performing the concertos of Handel and Geminiani was also much admired; nor did he fail to exhibit marks of opening excellence as a composer, in his own solos and concertos, occasionally introduced, as well as in several vocal dramatic productions, which evinced considerable imagination and spirit. The brilliant professional hopes founded on these achievements were destined, however, to be suddenly darkened: for the object of them met with an untimely death in the year 1778, by the upsetting of a pleasure-boat.

Thomas Cooke—who is there, having open ears, that does not know something of the versatile and ingenious Tom Cooke?—was born in Dublin, and was ready with his violin, at the age of seven, to play a concerto in public. Expert with hand, tongue, and pen, he has performed *three times three* successive solos, on as many different instruments, in one night, for his benefit—and, in moments of composure, has *written* for all of them. At a very early age, he became director and leader of the music at the Theatre Royal, Dublin; from which condition he suddenly transformed himself into that of a singer, and enjoyed a success of several seasons at the English Opera-House, in London, as vocalist and composer. His next course of exertion was at Drury Lane, as singer, and afterwards as musical director, leader, and composer, in which latter triple capacity he pursued a long and steady career. The violin was eminently useful in his hands, if it cannot be said to have been, in the highest degree, brilliant.

"Tom Cooke," observed a chronicler, some time since, in one of the magazines, "is certainly the most facetious of fiddlers, and is the only person at present connected with theatres, who smacks of the olden days of quips and cranks. Some of his conundrums are most amusing absurdities." After assigning to him, by a somewhat venturesome decision, the authorship of the receipt for getting a *vial-in* at a chemist's*, the same

* As to this asserted advantage of resorting to *chemical agency*, the joke is somewhat of the oldest—so we may as well turn its coat, and it will then wear the aspect of the following

HINT TO PURCHASERS.

To buy a fiddle when about,
Your way unto a Chemist's win,
Where, if but twelve-pence you lay out,
You're sure to get a *vial* "*in*."

writer gave two other specimens of Cooke's powers of jest, as thus:—

Once, whilst rehearsing a song, Braham said to Cooke, who was leading, "I drop my voice there, at night"—intimating that he wished the accompaniment to be more *piano*. "*You* drop your voice, do you?" said Cooke; "I should like to be by, and pick it up."

During the run of the Tragedy of Manfred, he remarked, "How Denvil keeps *sober* through the play, I can't think; for he is *calling for spirits*, from the first scene to the last!"

Some few years have now elapsed, since this well-remembered professor was borne to that spot where—instead of the achievements of talent, or the humours of character—a few meagre words, and a date or two, comprise usually *all* that is told to the stray pedestrian, or the passing wind!

Nicholas Mori, who, in certain respects, is entitled to rank high among English Violinists, was born in London, in 1796. The instrument that became the medium of his success in maturer years, was the object of his regard even in infancy—for, at three years of age, he was clutching a contracted specimen of it in his little grasp, and receiving some initiatory hints from Barthélemon. At eight, prepared and advertised as a prodigy, he was publicly playing that Professor's difficult concerto, styled "The Emperor." A few years later, his aspiring hand was conspicuous at the Concerts given by Mr. Heaviside, the Surgeon. To add the solid to the showy, the aid of Viotti (then almost a seceder from the profession) was wisely invoked; and nearly six years of his valuable guidance were obtained. Meanwhile, the active youth, still boyishly habited in jacket and frill, was careering through an engagement

in the Opera orchestra. There, at the age of twenty, he became leader of the Ballet, on the retirement of Venua, which post he held until, in 1834, he succeeded to that of the silvery Spagnoletti.

The *Philharmonic Concerts*, which commenced in 1813, had opened a new field for the display of high talent in almost every department of the musical art. The interest and advancement of Mori, in that quarter, were zealously undertaken by Viotti; and he became one of the Directors of the Society, for several seasons. In 1819, he married the widow of Mr. Lavenu—an alliance which made him the successor to a lucrative business.

Another native Establishment, instituted in his time, afforded further opportunity for the indefatigable exertions of Mori. The *Royal Academy of Music* received him within its walls, as one of its principal teachers of the violin. Among his pupils there, were Oury, Patey, Richards, Musgrove, and his own younger son, Nicholas. The success of his Concert-speculations, meanwhile, was attested by the overflowing audiences they constantly drew together; but such a result was not accomplished without great attendant labour and anxiety. His Classical Chamber-Concerts, commenced in 1836, in sequence to those of Blagrove's party, kept his name still prominent before the public until his death, which took place on the 14th June, 1839.

Few professional men have possessed equal influence in our musical circles, with that which was attained by this distinguished artist; and few have succeeded in acquiring so large a share of public patronage. Yet, favourite of the public as he was, from first to last, it must be regretfully added that he failed to secure the cordial sympathy of his professional brethren, to whom

his irritability of temper, and *brusquerie* of manner, rendered his official government no halcyon reign. For all that was thus unpleasant, however, a cause was discovered, that left his real character untouched. Physical disturbance, existing and accumulating for some length of time, before his sudden decease, had impaired the functions of the brain, and unsettled the moral impulses. With such ground for acquittal of the agent, offence was at once forgotten, and sympathy alone entertained.

As to the too eager pursuit of pecuniary advantage, which has been sometimes charged upon this artist, it may not be quite so easy to award entire absolution. It is very possible, however, that what seemed the love of money, was really the love of family, urging to provident collection. Should this plea be deemed inconclusive, there would still remain much excuse for the individual, in a certain bias, or tendency, that is notoriously far too prevalent among us. I mean that inveterate habit of referring all things to the *commercial principle*, which, causing the musical art, in this country, to be regarded mainly as an object of *gain*—is bitterly unfavourable to the growth of a kindly feeling among its members (each of whom too often learns to consider his neighbour as a rival to be repressed, rather than a friend to be assisted)—and wears down the enthusiasm for high art, by a vexatiously incessant attrition with common arithmetic.

> " Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ sede morantur,
> *Plutus* et *Euterpe!* "

In Germany, on the contrary, where art is loved chiefly for itself, and where moderate desires attend its exercise, the social feeling among musical men—a thing delightful to witness—is as beneficial in its influence on

the character of the individual professor, as in its effect on the general interests of the art. The same remark applies, in a lesser degree, to the credit of the musical profession in France. It is not too much to hope that the now obviously increasing diffusion of musical taste and intelligence among ourselves, will bring, as its ultimate consequences, a diminished care for emolument, and a closer fraternal feeling among our artists.

To advert more minutely to Mori's powers as a Violinist—since he was not great in *all* the requisites, it follows that he can scarcely be regarded as an artist of the very highest order. That mechanical command over the executive difficulties of the instrument, for which he was so remarkable, and which enabled him, when yet a boy, to delight the lovers of the surprising—was his chief merit—"the pith and marrow of his attribute." The tuition he received from Viotti, that most vigorous of Violinists, was of great importance in directing and maturing his great manual capacity; but, though he derived from him, and from his own assiduous study, a full, free tone, a dashing execution, and the most accurate neatness,—his temperament, somewhat hard and ungenial, seems to have been too little in accordance with Viotti's, to admit of his fully acquiring *all* the advantages which that great preceptor was fitted to impart. He caught most felicitously the art of triumphing over difficult passages—the perfection of mere fiddling—but he had not the soul

"To snatch a grace *beyond* the reach of *art*—"

to awaken, through the magic of expression, those deeper sensibilities in which music finds the truest source of its empire. Mori's playing, with its powers and its deficiencies, was admirably suited to the apprehension and desires of a fashionable audience. It was showy, but

not profound; striking, but not moving; full of artificial neatness, with little of natural grace. His hand wrought to more purpose than his mind. He was (before the malady that finally subdued him) a man of rigid nerve, and had all the advantages that confidence could bestow,—and these, especially in solo playing, are far from inconsiderable—but then, for want of the sensitiveness pertaining to a more delicate organization, he lost the finest part of what *might* have been accomplished. He has occupied a very marked place amongst English instrumentalists; but, for the reasons here alleged, the impression he produced seems not likely to prove of a very durable character, so as to secure to him any considerable future importance in musical annals. As a composer for his instrument, he possessed very slender pretensions. His performance itself, admirable as it was in some points, sufficiently shewed why he could not hope to distinguish himself in composition. The few manifestations he made in that way have given no cause for regretting his general habit of trusting to the works of others, for the musical ideas which he had to convey*.

* Should there be any to whom the foregoing estimate (which aims at being a candid one) may seem to render imperfect justice to the claims it deals with, I can only remind them that they have the same freedom as myself to indulge their opinion, and to assert it. Nay, I will even furnish them with four measured lines, by way of a text from which to expand their own more propitious adjudication; provided only, that they will accept them as conceived in any other spirit than that of ill-nature, which is hereby wholly disavowed:—

Ask not how long shall flourish yet his fame,
Nor when shall cease the record of his glory!
Oblivion *dares not* to efface his name,
Since e'en the *tomb* cries out "*Memento Mori!*"

Mr. Loder, of Bath, long prominent among provincials, and not unknown in the metropolis, was justly esteemed for his knowledge of the orchestra, and his utility as an able leader.

Mr. Henry Gattie, welcomed in his youthful days as a charming solo-player, in which capacity he ran for a time a pretty close race with Mori, has since contented himself, for the most part, with the less ambitious employment of orchestral playing; but his finished taste, and true musical feeling, ensured him a very favourable attention, when, on the memorable occasion of the experiment at Quartett performances (to be presently referred to), he took the Second Violin part among the confraternity at the Hanover Square Rooms.

Antonio James Oury was born in London, in the year 1800. His father, a native of Nice, of noble descent, left home to follow the early campaigns of the then General Buonaparte—was taken prisoner by the English, and lodged near Southampton, at which place he married, in 1799, the daughter of a Mr. Hughes, not unknown in literary circles—and then followed the joint profession of musician and dancing-master, possessing, at the same time, great natural capacity for several branches of the fine arts.

The subject of our present sketch, at the age of three years, commenced his infantine attentions to the violin, under the tuition of his own father, and of the father of our talented composer, George Macfarren. In 1812, young Oury became the pupil of three eminent professors—Mori, Spagnoletti, and Kiesewetter. In 1820, he heard Spohr for the first time: as a result of the impression then received, his perseverance became so great, that, for the space of seven months, he practised no less than fourteen hours a-day! In the same year, he went to Paris, to study under those magnates of the modern

French School of the Violin—Baillot, Kreutzer, and Lafont. From each of these masters (and without the knowledge of the others) our young artist managed to take two lessons a week, for several successive winters, at the same time studying composition under Monsieur Fétis. He then made his *début* at the London Philharmonic Society, at the Concert given for the widow and family of his late master, Kiesewetter. He also became a member of the "Ancient Concerts," Philharmonic, and Opera orchestras, and joint leader with François Cramer, at the Birmingham, York, Leicester, and Derby Musical Festivals—and also made several operatic tours in Ireland and elsewhere.

In 1826, Oury was engaged as Leader of the Ballet, Sub-Leader of the Opera, and Solo-Violin, at the King's Theatre; and, as successor of Mori and Lacy, he held this tripartite post for five years—displaying, whensoever the occasion permitted, the graces of a light and free execution.

In 1831, Mr. Oury married the distinguished pianiste, Mad^lle^ Belleville, whose father had also been an officer of Napoleon's, and was afterwards French Tutor to the Princesses of Bavaria. His first trip with Madame Oury was to Liverpool, as Leader of De Begnis' Italian Opera, where they gave, conjointly with Paganini, a grand Concert at the Theatre Royal, in behalf of the local poor. In 1832, they left England for Hamburgh, Berlin, St. Petersburgh, and Moscow, giving (in all) twenty-three Concerts, during a residence of two years, in Russia, and returning (after playing at the Imperial Court) to Berlin. They next visited Leipzig, Dresden, Prague, and Vienna—making a brilliant sojourn of two years in the Austrian capital. Mr. Oury visited Pesth and

Buda, alone; and gave seven Concerts, with great success and profit; played in presence of the Imperial Court, at the Bourge Theatre, Vienna, and returned to Munich. Again (accompanied by Madame Oury) he gave Concerts in all the principal towns of the Rhine, till they arrived in Holland, where Madame Oury was attacked by a serious illness, which interrupted a number of professional engagements. After a successful tour, however, to all the chief towns of Holland, they returned to Dusseldorf, on the occasion of the first performance of Mendelssohn's Oratorio of "Paulus." At Aix-la-Chapelle, they gave Concerts in conjunction with their friends Malibran and De Beriot—visited Belgium —played at the Court—and then resided two years in Paris, with Paganini, at the *Neotherme*. During this period, Mr. Oury entered the orchestra of "Les Italiens" (then performing at the *Odéon*), and made himself conversant with the operas of Donizetti, under the author's own conducting. Subsequently, he returned to England, after an absence of nine years.

In 1846 and 47, again visiting Italy, Mr. Oury and his accomplished partner gave Concerts at Rome, Naples, Venice and Milan, and returned to England in 1848. Mr. Oury next accepted the post of Leader of the Seconds, on the notable occasion of Mr. Balfe's forming a new orchestra (to meet the opposition of the Royal Italian Opera), at Covent Garden.

Before taking leave of the subject of this notice, a few particulars remain to be added. Mr. Oury, with his accomplished wife, has composed a number of brilliant Drawing-Room Duetts Concertante, for piano and violin, which have procured their *entrée* to most of the musical saloons and Courts of Europe. Mr. Oury has had no scanty share of honours bestowed on him—such

as the being appointed one of the Professors at the Royal Academy of Music in London, at the time of its foundation—a member of several Continental Philharmonic Societies—and an honorary member of the Academy and Congregation of St. Cecilia, at Rome. By these distinctions, it is sufficiently denoted that he has secured to himself a reputation through a large part of musical Europe.

It has been said, that a sense of injustice during the encounter with professional jealousies in the home field of exertion, first drove this clever artist to take a wider range, and visit continental cities. If so, he has no reason to regret the event, having abundantly "seen the world," and gathered of its laurels to any reasonable heart's content.

Among the professional pupils whom Mr. Oury has had the honour of aiding in their early practice, may be mentioned the well-known composers, George Macfarren and Sterndale Bennett, and (of amateurs) that distinguished dilettante and classical violinist, the present Earl Falmouth.

Joseph Haydon Bourne Dando, well-entitled to honourable mention among English violin-players, was born at Somers Town, in the year 1806. At an early age he had developed a taste for music, and, under the guidance of his uncle, Signor Brandi, attained to considerable facility of execution on his instrument.

In 1819, he was placed under the tuition of Mori; with whom he continued his studies (off and on) for about seven years, although no great cordiality appears to have been established between them. They were, in fact, of essentially different temperaments. After some years of practical training, during which he had mastered most of the difficulties written as *concertos*

and *studies* for the violin—finding the influence, as well as the disposition, of his master, opposed to the display of his acquirements in what may be termed musical gymnastics, our young artist wisely (and, for the advancement of musical taste in this country, fortunately) turned his genius and talents to useful account, in studying and illustrating the higher order of beauties contained in those charming works which had been written, by some of the great masters in composition, for "chamber-performance;" more especially the *quartetts* of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Spohr, &c.

Although opportunities for exhibiting his proficiency, as a solo-player, were restricted, they could not be entirely suppressed. Enough has transpired to warrant us in the conclusion, that, with a fair field, Mr. Dando might, in that branch of his art, at the present day, have stood second to none. As a *quartett-player*, he has achieved a reputation which places him in the front rank of contemporary violinists.

Any notice of Mr. Dando's professional career, which should pretend to throw a light on his progress and present position as an artist, must necessarily include much that properly belongs to a history of the rise and progress of Quartett-performances in England. It is to him, probably, that we are indebted, not only for the first public introduction of the Quartett in London, but also, in a great degree, for our present familiar acquaintance with those elegant works, which have of late years so largely contributed to the increase of our musical enjoyment. A license may therefore be reasonably solicited for diverging into matter which, under other circumstances, might appear foreign to the purpose of a mere biographical sketch. It is presumed, however, that no apology will be required for crossing

the strict boundary line, by stating some of the following particulars; seeing that they, in reality, are quite *apropos* of the general design of this work, and come with propriety under the present section of it.

From his youth upwards, Mr. Dando's society appears to have been courted, and his talents appreciated, by most of the amateurs of music in that part of our metropolis designated as the City, where more intimately he was known, owing to early introduction; and where his agreeable manners, added to his professional merits, contributed to the formation of some lasting friendships, as well as valuable connexions. Of these gentlemen, some were well skilled in the performance of the favourite works of the great quartett writers; and a larger number were qualified to form an accurate estimate of their merits. The charm of Mr. Dando's style, as a quartett-player, had in due time (about the year 1834-5) rendered the fact apparent to his friends, that the choice works of those masters, which were the delight of the initiated, still remained "a sealed book," not only to the general public, but even to the ordinary *habitué* of the concert-room; and it was thought that they only required a fair introduction, to secure to them that favour in public, which they so largely attracted in those private musical circles where they were familiarly known. Accordingly, in the year 1835, a subscription was opened amongst the amateurs—Mr. Dando's more immediate admirers—for the purpose of submitting some of these works to more open notice. An occasion of distress was selected as an excuse for an evening's public performance of quartetts, trios, &c. the profits of which were to be presented to a worthy individual who had fallen into pecuniary difficulties, and was about to quit our shores,

to better his fortunes in America. A party was formed, with Mr. Dando at its head, and the First (as far as we have been able to ascertain) Public Quartett Concert in this country, was given on the 23rd September, 1835, at the Horn Tavern, Doctors'-Commons. This presentation was the commencement of an epoch in the musical history of this country. On the occasion, the amateurs mustered in force, and brought their friends, to support the two-fold object they had espoused. The evening passed away in raptures. A second public trial was immediately undertaken, and announced for the 12th October, in the same year; and then a third (on the 26th October), each, in succession, proving more widely attractive than its predecessors. So unequivocal was the success of these experiments on public taste, and such was the *furore* excited in the musical world by them, that from these performances may be dated the *establishment* of Quartett Concerts in this country.

As might be expected, the first blow so effectively struck, led, by its own impulse, to a regular series, which followed at rapid intervals (first at the same rooms, and afterwards at the London Tavern), between the 13th January, 1836, and the 31st January, 1838, two consecutive seasons.

In the mean time, an early spark had fired the train, and the idea extended to the west end of the town, where a company of talented professors combined to set on foot a sequence of similar attractions; and four had been quickly announced under the title of "Concerti da Camera," at the Hanover Square Rooms, for the 7th and 21st of November, 5th and 19th of December, 1835. At the fourth of these meetings, Mr. Dando was engaged to play the principal *viola* part in Spohr's Third Double Quartett. The effect of his performance of the part

was notable; inasmuch as it led to an immediate invitation from Messrs. H. G. Blagrove and Lucas (the principal Violin and Violoncello on that occasion) to join *them* in the formation of a select party, for the more perfect study and presentation of Quartetts and other chamber instrumental compositions, which, by this time, were beginning to attract universal attention. Mr. Dando acceded to the proposition, and enrolled himself as the tenor-player of a party which was completed by the subsequent adhesion of Mr. Henry Gattie, as second violinist. The party, thus constituted, brought before the public the first of their "Quartett Concerts" at the Hanover Square Rooms, on the evening of the 17th March, 1836, with a completeness of effect in the *ensemble,* that threw all prior performances of their kind into the shade.

Under the impression produced by an audience of these interesting confederates, was penned the piece of panegyric that here-under asks the indulgent attention of such of my readers as are tolerant of verse:—

Happy the man of taste that's led
Hither, to have his cravings fed!
He who this dainty circle nears,
Takes in *ambrosia* at the ears,
Through a new sense, revives a fable,
And finds a feast that needs no table!
When thus *as one* are met these *four,*
What treat can Music yield us more?
Ye birds, that haunt by night or day grove,
Yield, yield in *dulcetry* to *Blagrove!*
Say, is he not, while warbling now,
Well worthy of a *topmost bough?*
And do not these, that add their claim,
Put all your "sylvan choirs" to shame?
What think ye, feathered ones! of notes
So ravishing—and *not* from *throats?*

How sweet, and exquisitely *natty*,
Those trills ancillary, from *Gattie!*
And list! t' enhance our joy what *can* do
The "even tenor" of smooth *Dando.*
Then, in the stream of sound to hook us
"Deeper, and deeper still," comes *Lucas.*
Felicity, with clearest voice,
Calls here on Echo to rejoice!
Desire may here, with resting feet,
Sit still—nor care to shift her seat.
—Who-e'er thou art, that long'st to *feel*,
Psha! Twitch no more "the electric eel!"
Nor dream thy languor to dispel
By bathos of "the diving bell!"
If in thy brain one corner yet
To dozing dulness be unlet—
If 'scape thou would'st from stupor's net,
And, like a man just free from debt,
Thy load of lumpishness forget—
Come! for one hour be Pleasure's pet!
Oh, come, and hear a choice *Quartett*
*Diffused** by this consummate set!

About the time that gave birth to the intentions of this party, Mori—then at the zenith of his powers—finding that his juniors in the profession were taking steps in advance of him†, and determining upon the maintenance of his position, organized a party in which Messrs. Watts, Moralt, and Lindley were his coadjutors. Without much prelude, they commenced operations on

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* "Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain."—*Johnson.*

† It must be borne in mind, that the three Quartett Concerts had been given, with Mr. Dando as Leader, at the Horn Tavern; and the four "Concerti da Camera," at the Hanover Square Rooms;—that both parties had advertised their forthcoming series;—and that it was pretty extensively rumoured that the Blagrove, Gattie, Dando, and Lucas party had combined to try their fortune in the new field.

the growingly attractive Quartett, by giving three "Classical Chamber Concerts" at Willis's Rooms, on the 6th and 20th January, and 3rd February, 1836.

The flood-tide of public favor had now set in. We find no less than four distinct parties of leading professors embarked in serial quartett-performances; with others, occasionally launching on the swelling current, just for a little cruize. "Chamber Concerts" became the fashion; "Musical Réunions," "Soirées Musicales," and "Classical Instrumental Concerts," multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. "The Beethoven Society" was formed, and a host of others followed suit—their names "legion"—*all* under favour of the absorbing interest in the Quartett. In short, since the season of 1836, these deserving works have become recognized and claimed as Public Property—witness the advertising columns of the diurnal and periodical press, which teem with announcements, in every form of allurement, inviting support.

Of all these associated parties, none has attained such distinguished popularity, and secured such unqualified approbation, as that of Messrs. Blagrove, Gattie, Dando, and Lucas. At an early stage of their career (the 23rd May, 1836), they were invited to perform at the "Philharmonic," where they produced a sensation which at once established them on the pinnacle of public favour. From that date up to the 29th April, 1842 (the close of their seventh season), they continued their combined operations, with unabated *éclat*, at the Hanover Square Rooms. About that period, Mr. Blagrove, being desirous of investing his interest in a private undertaking of his own, withdrew from the association. The retirement of Mr. Blagrove did not, however, affect the stability of the "Quartett Concerts." The veteran Loder, of Bath, recruited the party,

undertaking to perform the *viola* part; Mr. Dando resumed the principal violin; Messrs. Gattie and Lucas retained their original appointments. Thus remodelled, the party removed its attractions to Crosby Hall, in the City, where, with Mr. Dando at its head, "The Quartett Concerts" continue to be carried on up to the present day.

It has been less the purpose, in this retrospect, to eulogize individuals, or to make comparisons between parties, than to set forth premises wherefrom we may reasonably conclude that the *modus operandi* adopted by that party to which we have more particularly pointed attention, must have been the best, if not the only, road to true excellence. The Quartett demands, not only individual efficiency in its execution, but collective agreement in the expression of its parts; the nicest discrimination in delineating its delicacies; and an *ensemble* animated, as it were, by *one mind*. To produce this unity of parts in one completeness, it is not sufficient that parties should merely play together;—they absolutely must meet for frequent *practice* together, and (according to the light that is in them) fixing upon the best interpretation of the author's meaning, proceed to its exemplification with simultaneous feeling and decision.

We have it from undoubted authority—and record the fact for the benefit of all aspirants to public applause—that the Quartett-party, which has run the most brilliant and extended course, has devoted to the object which called it into existence the largest amount of industry and energy, in private preparation for its public exhibitions—these qualities being by them considered necessary additions to a well-digested experience, which, as the ground to begin upon, they previously possessed. Instead of rushing into public the moment they had formed

their compact with each other, and trusting to the novelty of their introduction, or relying on a name already inscribed in capitals, indicative of honours achieved in another branch of the art, more dependent on manual dexterity than on mental cultivation—we find these (then young) professors patiently submitting themselves to the drudgery of preparation. There is the best authority for stating that they did not think six or eight rehearsals, previous to the production of a work in public, too much trouble, or time and application thrown away, or even unnecessarily bestowed. The success of their undertakings has been commensurate with the pains which they underwent to secure it. This accounts for their having achieved the 'vantage-ground in the general competition for distinction, while others, of more matured reputation as individual performers, failed to attain the preference which they were equally in quest of, by *apparently* the same path. How otherwise, it might be asked, could . . . . . But lest some should consider the digression to be growing tedious, let us at once resume the object with which we started, and complete our biographical sketch—leaving the facts and hints that have been incidentally recorded, to the further (private) meditation of such as are more particularly interested in them.

Mr. Dando first appeared as a member of the Philharmonic orchestra, in 1831: since which time he has held an uninterrupted engagement in its front rank of violins. As an orchestral leader, himself, he has had a long and honourable career, as well in the provinces as in London and its suburban offshoots. In the City, he has almost exclusively occupied that post. At the great concerts given by the amateurs at the London Tavern; at those of the "Classical" and "Choral Harmonists"

Societies; also at others brought out on a less extensive scale, at the "Horn Tavern," Doctors' Commons, the "Albion," and "London" Tavern, his qualifications have been fully admitted, and the highest credit awarded. As to his peculiar manner, or style, it may doubtless be averred that, as a pupil, he must have profited largely by the example of his master, Mori; although, finally, his talents have become conspicuous in a very distinct school. Fire and vigour, more than feeling, were the characteristics of style in the one, while the other has become remarkable for the elegance of his expression, and the neatness of his execution—a neatness which is by no means unattended by the amount of vigour occasionally requisite to express the passion of an inspired author. In his hands, the violin has oftentimes become almost vocal, and his performance on that most expressive of instruments has been very characteristically described by an accomplished public critic, as "soul-satisfying in the extreme."

Henry C. Cooper, a fine solo-player, indoctrinated by Spagnoletti, holds a distinguished place among our Violinists. In the absence of materials for treating of him *in extenso*, his laurels, green and vigorous as they are, can at present only be recognized—not displayed—in these ministering pages.

Edward William Thomas, of Welsh parentage, was born in 1814. His commencement with the Violin was under Mr. W. Thomas, formerly Leader of Covent Garden Theatre. It was said that he was too old to "do any good" (being then twelve years of age), but the prediction—like many other such familiar croakings—came happily to nothing.

Leaving Mr. W. Thomas, his young name-sake was placed at the Royal Academy of Music, under Oury,

Cramer, Mori, and Spagnoletti; the result of which multiplication of masters was, that he no sooner began to feel the good effects of the endeavours of *one*, than he lost them under the different system pursued by *another*. To remedy this, he became a resident pupil in the house of the kind-hearted Spagnoletti, to whom, as well as to his first master (Thomas), he always evinced a feeling of grateful attachment.

His first appearance, as a Solo-player, was at "Russian Field's" Concert, at Her Majesty's Theatre, in 1832, when he played Spohr's Dramatic Concerto: this was also the year of his first engagement (by Mr. Monck Mason) at Her Majesty's Theatre, where he remained until the establishment of the Royal Italian Opera, which he left in 1850, to become the Leader of the Liverpool Philharmonic.

Bream Thom, a native of Portsmouth, dating his days from 1817, made his first approaches to the Violin at eight years of age, having from infancy evinced a predilection for music, although no other member of his family was that way inclined. He studied hard, and, at seventeen, was appointed Leader of the Orchestra at the Portsmouth Theatre. He appeared, in 1838, at the Hanover Square Concert-Room, in London, and was favourably received. Shortly afterwards (by the advice of Mr. Oury), he went to Paris, and placed himself under Monsieur Robretch, a professor to whom belongs the credit of having had some share in the tuition of De Beriot, and of Artot. Returning to England, he settled eventually at Brighton, where he has for some time officiated as Leader at the Theatre, Amateur Concerts, &c.

Charles Frederick Hall, five years a member of Her Majesty's Theatre, and the present Musical

Director of the Royal Marionette Theatre, London, was born at Norwich, in 1820.

When a mere child, his melodious voice attracted the attention of the Norwich denizens; but his early predilection for the stage induced his family to accept an engagement for him from Elliston, in 1829, for the purpose of bringing him out in juvenile operas (at the Surrey Theatre, London), in which Master Burke, Miss Coveney, Miss Vincent, and Master Henry Russell, &c. shared with our youthful vocalist the favours of the public. Eighteen months after this period, his friends recalled him to his birth-place, and articled him to Mr. Noverre, a dancing-master in high repute, by whose advice he immediately commenced the study of the Violin—upon which instrument he made such rapid progress, that his friends were urged to cancel their agreement with Noverre, and destine the youth exclusively for the musical profession.

Although his attainments in singing, as well as on the piano and violin, seemed to point with sufficient clearness to his proper path, a passion for the stage developed itself in 1833, when he appeared on the boards of the Norwich Theatre, in the character of "Little Pickle," in the farce of the *Spoiled Child;* by which personation he attracted such notice, that the manager of the Theatre engaged him to appear in that character at all the theatres belonging to the Norwich Circuit.

The family of our youthful musician, being anxious to wean him from a theatrical career, usually so trying to the principles of a young mind, placed him with a German Violinist (Herr Müller), of whose experience he availed himself to such extent as to become, in 1835, (when only 15 years of age) the Leader of the Norwich Theatre.

While on a tour with the Norwich Company, our young Violinist made acquaintance with Edmund Kean; and, but for the sudden demise of that rare but very rambling genius, would, in all probability, have been so fascinated by his society, as to have relinquished the steady pursuit of music. Soon after this event, however (in 1837), we find him residing at Norwich, as a Professor of the Violin, Piano, Guitar, and Singing, in which accomplishments he had the honour of instructing several families of distinction. He was also appointed Organist of one of the churches, and became the most eminent solo violinist of his own county, and its neighbourhood. The Rev. R. F. Elwin (for many years sole manager of the Norwich Festivals, and a great admirer of musical talent), was influential in placing the youthful Violinist at the head of the musical department in his native city.

Anxious to emulate the best musicians of the capital, Charles Hall, much against the wish of his family, repaired to London, in 1840, and became a student at the Royal Academy of Music, in which establishment he availed himself of the valuable instruction of the best masters belonging to the institution.

The late Mr. T. Cooke, when Musical Director of Drury Lane Theatre, induced Mr. Hall to accept an engagement there as Leader of the Ballets and Pantomimes, in which position he continued for the space of five years.

In 1844, this enterprising artist wrote and delivered some entertaining Musical Lectures at the Holborn Literary Institution, under the title of "Poesy and Minstrelsy."

Mr. Balfe, the Composer and Musical Director of Her Majesty's Theatre, being much pleased with

Mr. Hall's performance on the violin during the Jenny Lind Concerts, took great notice of him, and engaged him for five years at that large and fashionable establishment. In the first year of this engagement, Mr. Hall offered the "Swedish Nightingale" the sum of £1000 to sing at two Concerts in Norwich. That enchanting warbler accepted the offer—the Concerts were given, upon the most liberal scale—and our adventurous artist cleared nearly £800 by the speculation. The Lord Bishop of Norwich appropriated his palace to the use of the Queen of Song, and the whole city was a scene of excitement and rejoicing, during the lady's sojourn. After recording Mr. Hall's well-deserved profits on this occasion, it must be added, with regret, that a large musical speculation, in 1848, deprived him of the chief portion of what he had so acquired.

With an undaunted spirit, our persevering artist wrote another musical entertainment, entitled "The Romance of Village Life," which he gave, in 1850, at various London Literary Institutions, and which was warmly applauded on each occasion. Mr. Hall is the author of an amusing burlesque description of the well-known opera of *The Bohemian Girl*. He is also the author and composer of several favourite ballads: and some of the finest musicians of the day, among whom are Mr. Balfe and Mr. Wallace, have wedded his verse to music. His last production, now in course of publication, is entitled "Sacred Lays on the Ten Commandments."

To attempt a notice in detail of *all* the English Professors of the Violin who are yet pursuing their career, and seeking occasions to make, or to confirm, a reputation, is alike beyond my power, and beside my purpose. A few general remarks that here occur, shall be subjoined.

So little had instrumental chamber-music (until within the last sixteen years) been cultivated among us, that the Solo-player and the orchestral Leader were those to whom the public attention had been almost exclusively confined. To fill these two offices to the extent of all possible occasion, requires but a small number of individuals. Some musicians, possessing talents which, directed by an assiduous singleness of purpose, might qualify them to shine in either of these two capacities, were unwilling to encounter the toil of a competition, in which so very few of the candidates can meet with the recompense of election. Others, gifted with fine musical feeling and taste, and having sound notions of the art generally, but not fully possessed of the strength of nerve which gives confidence, or the manual suppleness essential for brilliant execution, were naturally still less willing to court the rarely accorded honours of prominent employ. Of these two classes, principally, were the men who filled the ranks of our best orchestras. In the Opera Band were found the names of WATTS, ELLA (well-known also for his taste and resources, as a caterer for the delight of our higher musical circles), REEVE, and PIGOTT,—in the Philharmonic, WAGSTAFF, DANDO, GRIESBACH, and MORALT—good violinists, accomplished musicians, and forming an invaluable acquisition in an orchestra. It was one of the consequences to be anticipated from the *Chamber Concerts* at length introduced (and to which Fashion soon began to lend the stamp of her currency), that a clearer and higher appreciation of such men as these should be formed. That expectation has been partly realized; and, with its fuller accomplishment, we shall be sure to have good orchestras in goodly number.

—For its connection with the state and prospects of

the Violin School in England, the institution of the "Royal Academy of Music" calls for a few words of notice in this place. The vocal art, through some unexplained defects in the system pursued there—certainly not from the want of fine voices in the country—has hitherto derived no very conspicuous advantage from the establishment in question; but the instruction communicated to instrumentalists must have been of a better kind, for results of some importance have been manifested. Of several of the students who have cultivated the powers of the violin with marked success, the most distinguishable, perhaps, in point of genius, is MAWKES, a performer of very great promise, who had the benefit of aid from the master-hand of Spohr. Suddenly, however, and much to the regret of those who were watching with interest the development of his fine capacity, he seceded from playing in public, and is now living in seclusion. To this strange sequestration of a valuable gift, he is said to have been induced by scruples of a religious nature. *Why* any branch whatsoever of the refined arts may not be followed, as a profession, in perfect compatibility with the higher and ulterior purposes of life, it is difficult to discover. A man does not, commonly, take his principles *from* his worldly calling: he brings them *to* it, and finds in it a field for their due employment and exercise. Objections, however, that refer us to the conscience, as their seat and source, must ever be respected, even when (as in this case) their essential force is not apparent.

BLAGROVE is another name that claims especial mention, among the trophies of the Academy. This professor, also, has fortunately enjoyed the highest means of accomplishment in his art, having superadded to his noviciate at the Academy, a later prosecution of

his studies under the direction of Spohr, of the purity and refinement of whose style he exhibited delightful traces in the quartett-performances at the head of which he figured, when the merits of that delightful class of compositions were as yet but imperfectly known. Mr. Blagrove enjoys the unquestioned reputation of being one of the best of our living artists.—SEYMOUR is another of the Academy pupils whose talent has become favourably known to the public. As leader of the "younger strengths" forming the Academy orchestra, he has shewn much steadiness and ability.

When it is remembered how large an amount of instrumental talent in France has owed its development to the fostering care and excellent system of the *Conservatoire*, a very happy augury may be drawn from the results in this kind that have as yet followed the institution of the English Royal Academy of Music. Supposing this establishment to be rightly and effectively conducted, one of its beneficial consequences as regards the Violin-Students (and that by no means the smallest) will be found in the harmonious unity of feeling and execution that will pervade our orchestras, supplied as they will then mainly be, from the same source. As a general fact, it has been remarked with regret by Spohr, the great German master, that the Violinists of an orchestra never originate from the same School;—the exceptions to this being in the Conservatories of Paris, Prague, and Naples, where the orchestras have been enabled to produce surprising effects, through this unity among the Violinists.

By way of *tail-piece* to this chapter, I am tempted to present a brief sketch of an individual in whose hands the Violin, as respects its *lower* range of capabilities, was

long, and most conspicuously, illustrated. Having devoted our attention at some length to the instrument, under its *English* aspect, shall we refuse a passing glance at the *Scotch* Fiddle, in the person of one of its most restless and remarkable expositors?

Neil Gow—the head of a race of north-country instrumentalists, and one of the most zealous in the line where Music is the special handmaid of the Dance—was born in Strathband, Perthshire, in the year 1727, of humble parentage. His first efforts were made at the age of nine; but he had no instructor till, at thirteen, he was taken in hand by one John Cameron. Whilst yet a youth, he carried off the prize at a trial of skill among the best performers in that rather out-of-the-way district—on which occasion, one of the minstrels who was the umpire (a blind man) declared that he could distinguish *the stroke of Neil's bow* among a hundred players! In process of time, while thus vigorously engaged in working his way, Neil obtained the patronage of the Athol family, and the Duchess of Gordon, whereby he became noticed and sought after in the fashionable world. He was eminent in one department of Scotch national music—the livelier airs belonging to the class of what are called the strathspey and the reel. The characteristic expression of the Highland reel depends materially on the *power of the bow*, and particularly on the upward (or returning) stroke; and herein Neil was truly great—"un homme marquant," in a two-fold sense. His mode of bowing, indeed, by which he imparted the native Highland *gout* to certain Highland tunes (such as "Tulloch Gorum" for instance), was never fully attained by any other player. He was accustomed to throw in a *sudden shout*, as an addendum in the quick tunes, so as to electrify the dancers! In

short, his fiddling—for its communication of saltatory fury to the heels of his countrymen—was like the bite of a tarantula.

This active promoter of activity was also a compiler of national airs and tunes, and dabbled occasionally in composition—his son Nathaniel arranging and preparing the whole for publication. Forcible humour, strong sense, knowledge of the world, propriety of general conduct, and simplicity in carriage, dress, and manners, were combined recommendations of Neil Gow, who has figured on the canvas of Raeburn and of Allan. His brother Donald, a "fidus Achates," was of good service to him as his steady and constant *Violoncello*. Neil died in 1807, at Inver, near Dunkeld.

CHAPTER VII.

AMATEURS.

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb?"—BEATTIE.

It is as plain to the understanding, as it is palpable to the ear, that Amateurs, or dilettante performers, on an instrument like the violin, so rich in its capabilities, but so exacting in its demands, are in a very trying situation. The amount of mere mechanical labour—the simple manipulation—which it is essential to employ, before the very finest mental disposition can express itself even passably on the violin, is a thing to startle the coolest enquirer. Giardini, when asked how long it would take to learn to play on the fiddle, answered, "twelve hours a day, for twenty years together." There may be hyperbole in this—but it is only truth in too swelling a garb. There is the strongest meaning and reality in the sentiment of difficulty which the reply was intended to convey*. It has been said of a pro-

* In the getting-up of Concertos for the annual *Concours* in Paris, the Violin students exercise a perseverance and length of labour truly surprising; and, in the result, such is the perfect manner in which the same Concerto is executed successively by sometimes a dozen candidates, that it would puzzle the most skilful judges to discriminate the individual to whom the prize

fessor of some eminence, who was current some years ago in London, that he has devoted himself for a month together, during the whole disposable hours of each day, to the practice of the passages contained in one single page of music; and many remarkable instances might be adduced (were the point sufficiently doubtful to require it) in proof of the prodigious exertions in private, that have indispensably preceded those public displays by which the excellence of great performers has been established. "Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ," is indeed that precept whose spirit is the guide of the destined Violinist.

> Illum non rutilis veniens Aurora capillis
> Cessantem vidit, non Hesperus!

His fiddle must be his inseparable companion, cultivated before all other society, beloved before all other worldly objects—the means and the end, the cause and the reward, of his assiduous toils. Such are the conditions on which the *mastery* of this "so potent art" depends. Through this road must they travel, who aspire to real excellence. Alas! what sort of compliance with such discipline are we to expect from the miscellaneous, fitful gentleman whom we designate too roundly by the term Amateur? What full conquest can we anticipate for him, who is the volatile lover of a mistress *so* jealous that she was never yet *entirely* won, save by the most refined arts of study, and by attentions the most

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should be awarded. In such cases, were it not for the subsequent resource—the safe and certain test of sight-playing, which brings into operation the intellect as well as the hand—it would perhaps be impossible to give a single decision that should not be open to dispute. Thus great is the power of execution which practice confers—and thus rigorous, the *need* of that practice!

persevering and the most delicate? No—there is no sane hope of consummate success upon *easy terms;* and accordingly we find that, although Amateurs are sufficiently abundant, good players among them are not *very* numerous—and accomplished ones, positively few.

The Duke of Buckingham, Charles the Second's rattling favourite, so noted for the versatility of his acquirements, is characterized, in one of Pope's summary lines, as

Chemist, *Fiddler*, Statesman, and Buffoon;

and the amount of his qualification in the two *latter* respects has been pretty nicely weighed and exhibited; but what kind of a *fiddler* was he? History is ashamed to say—but her silence is well understood by philosophy to signify contempt: it is a silence more expressive than words—than even those memorable words, "So much for Buckingham!"

Dr. Johnson, whose habit of sound judgment has marked itself on almost every subject that came within the grasp of his comprehensive mind, appears to have duly appreciated the exemplary labours which distinguish the Violinist by *profession*. We all know how little *music* there was in the great Doctor's soul; but, even as regards the mechanical part of musical practice, few of us have given him credit for such a readiness to estimate fairly, as he has been really recorded to have shewn. The fact is, that he was a prodigiously hard-working man himself, and had an honest admiration for hard work, in whatever career manifested. "There is nothing, I think" (quoth he) "in which the power of art is shewn so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things, we can do something *at first*. Any man will forge a bar of iron, if you give him a hammer; not so well as a smith, but tolerably. A man will saw

a piece of wood, and make a box, though a clumsy one; but—*give him a fiddle and a fiddle-stick, and he can do nothing.*"

If a *learned man* can thus calculate the value of professional application, a *child* can feel its results, and, feeling, can discern between the practised player and the deficient dilettante—as we have already seen in the little story which had for its hero the infant Earl of Mornington.

From the very marked disparity subsisting, of necessity, between the Professor and the Amateur—a disparity greater as respects the Violin, than is observable as to any other instrument—it should follow that modesty was a general characteristic of the non-professional class. Yet, as if to confirm the truth of the current axiom, that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," it occurs too often that the deference due to laborious attainment is withheld, and that the Amateur, content with a mode of playing as noisy as it is shallow, assumes a prominence which exposes him to ridicule, and gives pain to his friends, on *his* account, if not on their own. If he do not err after this fashion, he will perhaps affect to hold cheap the talent which he finds it were *dear* to imitate. It has been found, in the matter of hand-writing, that lordly personages have sometimes scrawled illegibly, rather than write in such fairer characters as might make them seem to possess a knowledge in common with clerks and schoolmasters. In like manner, certain dandy dilettanti, so far from regarding the interval of merit between themselves and the accomplished professor as a "hiatus valde deflendus," or at least as a reason for becoming diffidence on their own part, have curled the lip of disdain, while hinting that *their* style of playing was not that of people

who *played to live ;*—as if, by a strange contrariety of ideas, it were *de*preciation to perform for a price! There is something to our purpose on this head in the first volume of Anecdotes, &c. by Miss Hawkins: and here is the passage:—

"Dr. Cooke, the composer, was giving lessons on the violin to a young man of a noble family. The young man was beginning to play; but, in the common impetuosity of a novice, he passed over all the *rests*. He therefore soon left his master far behind him. 'Stop, stop, Sir!' said the Doctor, 'just take me with you!' This was a very unpleasant check to one who fancied he was going on famously; and it required to be more than once enforced; till at length it was necessary to argue the point, which the Doctor did with his usual candour, representing the *necessity* of these observances. The pupil, instead of shewing any sign of conviction, replied rather coarsely, 'Ay, ay, it may be necessary for *you*, who get your living by it, to mind these trifles; but *I* don't want to be so exact!'"

The strong contrast afforded by the glare of pretension, against the opaqueness of incapacity, may often furnish forth a diverting picture. Michael Kelly, in his "Reminiscences," has drawn such a one, from an original who *flourished* about sixty years since. "The Apollo, the Orpheus, of the age," says he, "was the redoubted and renowned Baron Bach, who came to Vienna to be heard by the Emperor. He, in his own conceit, surpassed Tartini, Nardini, &c. This *fanatico per la musica* had just arrived from Petersburg, where he went to make his extraordinary talents known to the Royal Family and Court. Now, I have often heard this man play, and I positively declare that his performance was as bad as any blind fiddler's at a wake

in a country-town in Ireland: but he was a man of immense fortune, and kept open house. In every city which he passed through, he gave grand dinners, to which all the musical professors were invited: at Vienna, myself among the rest. One day, having a mind to put his vanity to the test, I told him that he reminded me of the elder Cramer. He seemed rather disappointed than pleased with my praise;—he acknowledged Cramer had some merit, adding that he had played with him out of the *same book* at Mannheim, when Cramer was First Violin at that Court; but that the Elector said *his* tone was far beyond Cramer's, for Cramer was tame and slothful, and *he* was all fire and spirit—and that, to make a comparison between them, would be to compare a dove to a game cock! In my life, I never knew any man who snuffed up the air of praise like this discordant idiot. After he had been heard by the Emperor (who laughed heartily at him), he set off for London, in order that the King of England might have an opportunity of hearing his dulcet strains!"

Another curious story is that related elsewhere of an Amateur in Paris, who began each day of his existence by studying practically a sonata, but, in doing so, did not give himself the trouble to *quit his bed*, or to lay aside his cotton night-cap and its pertaining yellow ribbon, which might seem to represent on his brow the laurels and crown of the Cynthian Apollo!

The more clumsy and hard-going sort of those who play *pour se distraire*, ought not to distract their *friends* with their playing; but, when an Amateur is so *bad* as to be insensible of the fact, he is only the more apt to appeal to his acquaintance—not for advice, of course, but approval. If, in that state, he have any *discernment* connected with the object of his grand mistake, it

is just of that kind and degree which enables him to select, for auditors, those of his friends who happen to be the most distinguished for patience and mildness of character. They, poor souls! at each preparatory screw of the fiddle-pegs, conscious of coming torture, wince and draw in their breath; at every saw of the sharp-set bow, they sigh with fear, or perspire with agony; for well do they know that

> Some are *sometimes* correct, through chance's boon,
> But Ruffman never *deviates into* tune!

Their sufferings, however, are silent; until peradventure, when 'the operation' is at length over, they do such discredit to their conscience as to stammer out a tremulous "bravo!" or a "very well!" in accents of courtesy that seem to sicken at their own import. Your *very* bad player, be it remarked, is hardly ever content with plain toleration—he must have the sugared comfits of praise*.

Admitting, as a reluctant principle, that we should lend our ears *at all* to those fanciers of the instrument who are so bad as to be out of sight of mediocrity, and below the point where improvement *begins*, it is clearly

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* If an Amateur, who is capable of murdering time, should yet have the grace of a disposition to offer some *apology* for the act, I would suggest his quoting, for that purpose, the subjoined rhyming octave:—

> "Cease, cease this fiddling," cried Sir John,
> To Ned, his tune-perplexing son—
> "You *lose your time*, you idle lout."
> "No, sir, my time I keep, throughout."
> "Psha! *keep* time! no, *kill* time, you mean,"
> Mutter'd the father, full of spleen.
> "*Kill* him! well, sure, sir, I'm no zany,
> For killing him who has killed *so many*."

of urgent consequence that we should demand (or beseech) to be indulged with the *shortest* infliction that may be—an air *without* the variations, or a quick movement *without* the prefatory adagio. The Horatian precept, 'Esto brevis,' was never more applicable than here; but, alas! in no case is it less heeded. "As you are strong, be merciful," says Charity; but the spirit of this fine recommendation is reversed by the Amateur belonging to "le genre ennuyeux"—reversed in conformity with his own predicament. As he is weak, he is cruel. He will not abate one minim, nor afford a single bar's rest. He goes on and on, with no other limit, oftentimes, than that which is eventually imposed by the laws of physics, in the shape of personal fatigue. Such, in his *worst* state, is the Young Pretender!

But if so much is to be endured from an individual tormentor—from *one* exercise of a

"violon faux, qui jure sous l'archet,"

what are the sufferings which may be produced by a *combination* of such barbarous bowmen—*all* eager and emulous, *all* rough and ready? The multiplication of discord *thus* generated, who shall calculate? It is past all understanding: it is the Babel of the tongues of instruments! *This* species of compound misery is too painful to dwell upon, unless in mollified association with the ludicrous. Under this impression, I will proceed to give a sketch of an affair of Amateur Chamber-Music—being the description of a *Quartett-Party*, freely drawn from the French of an eminent living writer, whose lively and graphic powers in the delineation of familiar scenes have procured him very extensive admiration among his own countrymen, and some share of credit *parmi nous autres Anglais*. Here then is the exposition: but let imagination first draw up the curtain,

and place us in view of the convened guests at a musical *soirée*, given by some people of middling condition, but somewhat ambitious pretensions, in a private apartment somewhere in Paris :—

"After several hours of the evening had worn away in lengthened expectation, till the assembled party, tired of speculating and talking, began to *yawn*, the old gentleman who usually undertook the *bass* instrument, was seen to look at his watch, and was heard to murmur between his teeth, 'What a bore is this! How am I to get home by eleven, if the time goes on in this do-nothing way—and I here since seven o'clock, too! So much for your early invitations;—but they sha'nt catch *me* again.'

"At length, the host, who had been passing the evening in running about to borrow instruments, and collect the 'disjecta membra' of the music, reappears, with a scarlet countenance, and in the last state of perspiring exhaustion—his small and feeble figure tottering beneath the weight of sundry large music-books and a tenor fiddle. 'Here I am again,' exclaims he, with an air that is rendered perfectly wild by his exertions: 'I've had a world of trouble to get the *parts* together; but I've managed the business. Gentlemen, you may commence the quartett.'

"'Ay, ay,' said Mons. Pattier, the bass-fiddle man, 'let us begin at once, for we've no time to lose—but where's *my* part?'

"'There, there, on the music-desk.'—

"'Come, gentlemen, now let us *tune*.'

"The constituent Amateurs proceed accordingly to the labour of getting into mutual agreement; during which process, the auditory shuffle about, and insert themselves into seats as they can. Already are yawn-

ing symptoms of impatience visible among the ladies, to whom the very mention of a quartett furnishes a pretence for the vapours, and who make no scruple to *talk*, for diversion's sake, with the loungers behind their chairs. Whispering, laughing, quizzing, are freely indulged in, and chiefly at the special expense of the musical *executioners* themselves.

"The enterprising *four*, at length brought into unison, plant themselves severally before their desks. The elderly *basso* has stuck his circlet of green paper round the top of his candle, for optical protection from the glare: the tenor has mounted his spectacles: the second violin has roughened his bow with a whole ounce of rosin; and the *premier* has adjusted his cravat so as to save his neck from too hard an encounter with his instrument.

"These preliminaries being arranged, and the host having obtained something of a 'lull' among the assembly, by dint of loud and repeated exclamations of *hush!*—the First Violin elevates his ambitious bow-arm, directs a look of command to his colleagues, and stamps with his foot. 'Are we *ready?*' he enquires, with a determined air.—

"'*I* have been ready any time these two hours,' replies Mons. Pattier, with a malcontent shrug of his shoulders.—

"'Stay a moment, gentlemen,' cries the Second Fiddle; 'my treble string is down. 'Tis a new string—just let me bring it up to pitch again.'

"The Tenor takes advantage of this interval, to *study* a passage that he fears is likely to 'give him pause;' and the Bass takes a consolatory pinch of snuff.

"'I've done it now,' ejaculates at length the Second Violin.—

"'That's well, then; attention again, gentlemen, if you please! Let us play the *allegro* very moderately, and the *adagio* rather fast—it improves the effect.'—

"'Ay, ay, just as you like; only, you must beat the time.'

"The signal is given; the First Violin starts off, the rest follow, after their peculiar fashion. It becomes presently evident that, instead of combination, all is contest; notwithstanding which evidence of honorable rivalry, somebody has the malice to whisper, pretty audibly, 'The rogues are in a conspiracy to flay our ears!'

"Presently, the First Violin makes a dead halt—'There's some mistake: we're all wrong.'

"'Why, it seems to *go* well enough,' observes the Tenor.

"'No, no, we're out *somewhere*.'—

"'Where is it then?'

"'Where? That's more than I can tell.'—

"'For my part,' says the Second Violin, 'I have not missed a note.'—

"'Nor I either.'—

"'Nor I.'—

"'Well, gentlemen, we must try back.'

"'Ay, let us begin again; and pray be particular in beating the time.'

"'Nay, I think I mark the time *loud* enough.'

"'As for *that*,' exclaims the hostess, 'the person who lodges below has already talked about complaining to the landlord.'

"The business is now resumed, but with no improved success, although the First Violin works away in an agitation not very dissimilar to that of a maniac. The company relax into laughter—and the performers come to a stand-still!

"'This is decidedly *not* the thing,' says the conducting violinist, Monsieur Longuet,—'There is doubtless some error—let us look at the bass part.—Why, here's a pretty affair!—*you* are playing in B flat, and we are in D.'

"'I only know that I've been playing what you told me—the first quartett in the first book'—replies old Monsieur Pattier, florid with rage.

"'*How* on earth *is* it then? let us see the title-page. Why, how is this? a quartett of *Mozart's*, and *we* are playing one of *Pleyel's!* Now really that is too good!'

"Renewed laughter is the result of this discovery, and the abortive attempt ends with a general merriment, the contagion of which, however, fails to touch old Monsieur Pattier, who can by no means turn into a *joke* his indignation at a mistake that has effectually put a stop to the performance of *the Quartett.*"

For the credit of English Amateurs, it is to be hoped that so elaborate a display of incompetence—so complete a *fiasco*—as is presented in the foregoing sketch, has very rarely its parallel among ourselves.

Apropos of quartetts, it is related that His Most Catholic Majesty, Charles the Fourth, King of Spain, piqued himself not a little on his abilities as a violin-performer. Summer and winter, did this royal and reiterating practitioner perform, every morning, at six precisely, his *quatuor*, with three other violins; himself, of course, the violin *par excellence:* and, with the trifling drawbacks of missing his notes, and breaking his time (as if to mark his royal independence), he may indeed be said to have approved himself a king among fiddlers.

Another quartett-player of the class which Flattery herself can scarcely help frowning at, was the late Sir William Hamilton, whose acquirements in other ways must have contrasted oddly enough with his feebleness as a fiddler. "Sir William Hamilton, who was now at an advanced age," says Ferrari, in his gossipping book, "was a kind and good-humoured man; but he used to bore us with his performance on the *viola*, especially in Giardini's quartetts, which I verily believe derived their greatest value in his eyes from the circumstance of Giardini's having been his master."—Doubtless, with all his amiable qualities, Sir William had something of the obstinacy which belongs so closely to evil-doers on stringed instruments; doubtless there was no deterring him from "the *un*even *tenor* of his way."

The about-to-be subjoined *sestett* of condemnatory lines is *not* intended to apply to Sir William Hamilton (who had, at least, the merit of fostering Giardini), but, generally, to him who, having no sort of summons from Apollo, no musical vocation whatsoever from Nature, has persisted, nevertheless, to the end of his days, in being what is called a tormentor of cat-gut. A person of this peculiar turn of mistake, may be said to fright the fiddle from its propriety—for surely, in his hands, it wholly loses its temper and character. Making his fiddle-bow the stalking-horse of his vanity, he walks over the strings in an adagio, or curvets in an andante, with action that has nothing of the graceful, and much of the ludicrous. Such a being is in the extreme of the wrong. He hunts after a shadow: like Ixion, he embraces a cloud. His pursuit is frivolous, because it is without a chance of attaining its object. Unable to play in time, he is perpetually out of season: unable to stop in tune, he is ever in a false position. He wears

out his existence in an unconscious dream; and his harsh discords and unpleasing sharps are as the *snoring* thereof. He dies in a delusion; his ricketty crotchets and uneasy quavers are exchanged for one long *rest;* and here is the amount of his *value,* in six lines—

ON AN AGED MUSICAL TRIFLER.

The silly dilettante, who
A thank-less violin doth woo,
Till *old* he looks as Saturn,
Can (to denote just what he *is*)
No name receive so fit as this—
A *spoon,* of *fiddle-pattern.*

By way of disporting a little further on this theme, I have spun a few lines in which the reference is to that incongruous identity so often found within the circle of private life—a good man, and bad fiddler:—

Ralph Rasper is an honest man,
Prone to do all the good he can;
He never lets the piteous poor
Go meatless from his open door:
He loves his wife—he pays his bills—
And with content his household fills.
He seeks, in short, the rule of right,
And keeps his conscience pretty white:
But save, oh, save us from his *fiddling!*
It is so very—*very* middling!

Enough, however, of the indicative kind, as concerning the sins and follies of the Amateur species. Are they unpardonable? Nay—they claim indulgence through the very *cause* which produces them. It is the inspiring motive—the instrumental love, or love of the instrument—which redeems, in some sort, the errors to which it gives birth. We must not be too severe on the zeal which is indiscreet, lest we discountenance good faith, and nip affection in the bud. Shall

we excommunicate our brother, for that he is too fond of fiddling? Nay, rather, let us reserve our censure for him who hath *no* fiddling in his soul. Cease we, then, to dwell on deficiencies—let us "leave off discourse of disability,"—except so far as may be necessary towards administering any little further wholesome advice, with a friendly view to practical improvement. In the past observations, let me not be thought to have had no better purpose than that of playing the cynic for my own indulgence. Myself an Amateur, and one of by no means large calibre, I should indeed be doing what were equally graceless and witless, did I seek the damage of the class to which I belong—that is, to which I *have* belonged, in practice, and still belong, by inclination and sympathy. My object is reform—the reform of acknowledged errors and proved abuses—but, while advocating the principles of that reform to the utmost extent that is compatible with reason and propriety, I will never consent to abandon my "order."

Allusion has been made, at the commencement of this chapter, to the very large amount of time which the *Professor* must devote to his art, as one of the absolute conditions of eminence. The ends of the Amateur may, of course, be answered with a smaller expenditure of his moments. If he possess the requisite predisposition for the instrument, *two hours* a day will suffice him. This must be regarded as the *minimum*—and with this, according to Spohr (a very high authority), he may make such progress as to afford himself and others great enjoyment of music, in quartett-playing, in accompanying the pianoforte, or in the orchestra.

The principal error against which Amateurs have to guard themselves, is that species of *ambition* which impels them to imitate the showy and more external

quality of professional playing, called execution*. It is natural enough that what is most obvious should make the greatest impression at first, and should most readily attract imitation; but it is, on the other hand, certain, that this same superficial principle addresses itself rather to the senses than to the imagination, and that the pleasure which it affords is trivial and evanescent. If execution do not come recommended by the superior associations of accurate tune, fine tone, and characteristic expression, it is unworthy of a welcome, and can only impose on the most shallow-minded auditor. In that poor and bald state, it is like the verbiage in a silly oral discourse, or the language of un-respective parrots. If it come, moreover, unaccompanied by the common regulator, time, it is still more absurd and insignificant, and may be likened to a fit of the insanely capricious activity called St. Vitus's dance. Nothing, in fact, can make amends for the grievous sin of

"Omitting the sweet benefit of *time*."

It should never be forgotten that, in the playing of the most simple piece of music—the commonest air—

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* The injurious and disqualifying effect of musical vanity, complained of in France as well as here, is thus noticed by M. Castil-Blaze:—"Although music is every where taught to our youth, and is an art cultivated by a very considerable number of Amateurs, we find very few amongst them who are really useful with regard to playing in concert. And this proceeds, partly, from the fact of each individual desiring to occupy the first place. I have known violin-players renounce their instrument, because of finding themselves restricted to the *second part*. As for your *tenor*, it is a department not to be mentioned, and is left in the hands of those good elderly dullards who have already forgotten the half of what they never very well knew."

there is much more required than merely to render, or deliver, the notes that are dotted over the page. It too often occurs, however, that the Amateur, who chances to have heard at some Concert a fantasia or a pot-pourri, performed by the agile bow of a De Beriot or a Sainton, returns home fascinated exclusively by the brilliant execution he has witnessed, and stimulated by vague aspirations after similar power of display. He calls next day at a Music-shop, and just "happens to enquire" whether the said piece is in print. It is handed to him, and he finds, to his agreeable surprise, that the passages, with a few exceptions, do not look so difficult as their dashing effect the evening before would have led him to anticipate. He buys the piece, and, with uncased fiddle, sits down before it, in his own chamber. He picks out the passages with which he is best able to tickle his own ear; hammers them over till his *hand* gets some familiarity with them; hurries the time, to encourage his mind in the favourite idea of "execution;" slurs over those passages that threaten to puzzle him; and, having got through the thing *à tort et à travers*, hastens to shew his friends what he can do (in reality what he can *not* do) as a performer of De Beriot's celebrated fantasia! A little applause, from the over-complaisant or unthinking, deludes him, already too confident, into the belief that he has succeeded in *that* piece; and the same ambition of display, coupled with the eager and unrepressed love of novelty, leads him on to attempt another, and another, and to spoil himself with more *triumphs* of the same unfortunate and mistaken kind. Thus, everything is done most imperfectly—no satisfaction is given to a single soul of the commonest musical notions—and no real progress whatever is made. In short, when once the

unhappy Amateur abandons himself exclusively to *execution*—it is all over with him!

It is impossible to build without the frequent use of the ladder. The *scales* are the ladders of music; and, without constant and diligent recourse to them, there is no true edification—no reaching to "perfection's airiest ridge." Slowly and cautiously must they be ascended and descended, at first, till the acquisition of a firm hold, and a nice habit of measurement; then comes the dexterity that enables the practitioner to run up and down with a safe celerity of precision, such as the curious beholder may witness in the movements of those Hibernian hod-iernal ministrants of mortar, who are so powerfully instrumental towards the construction of houses.

Let not the young Amateur, then, be diverted from the practice of his *scales*, which are the regular steps to improvement. Let him not commit the error of jumping about among those broken and irregular *flights*, consisting of bits of airs, and snatches of tunes. These will not help to raise the musical edifice; and the *expectations* which they may assist to build, will prove mere castles in the air. The dryness and sameness of the labour are apt to be alleged as the excuse for omitting this essential practice of the scales and intervals; while the love of melody is pleaded in behalf of the more eccentric course. Now, what should be desiderated for the student is, not to love *melody* less, but *improvement* more. He should not, by reason of the tedium experienced in working at the scales, cast them aside—for, while he perseveres, on the contrary, in daily exercise upon them, are there not the immortal Solos of Corelli, to furnish him with all that is needful of the recreative principle? Here he will find refresh-

ment enough, after the perhaps fatiguing iteration of the ladder-work. Here, in connexion with passages that will form his hand—here, along with modulation not dull and crabbed, but graceful and natural—he will find enough of *melody* to sweeten his toil, without impairing it—to cheer his progress, without retarding it. Here he will find fascination for his ear, with no corruption for his taste—

"Airs and sweet sounds, that give delight, and *hurt not.*"

Yes, when the tyro, tired, makes yawning complaint of the want of encouragement, we would point to the Solos of Corelli, and say to him, *Hæc tibi dulcia sunto* —let *these* be unto thee for sweet-meats.

This distinction, however, should be noted—that while Corelli is recommended for the acquisition of *tone* and *steadiness*, he is not a sufficient authority as to the varieties and subtleties of *bowing;* for (as heretofore observed) much that relates to these has been added *since* his time to the province of the violin. But the cultivation of these graces and refinements of the bow is, after all, in its natural order, a thing for later attention. The simplicity of Corelli is always admirable for the earlier purposes; and then, for the niceties of the bow, and for the communication of modern resources, there are various special guides of good value—as the studies of Fiorillo—the elaborate, systematic, and explanatory "Violin-School" of Spohr, as edited for English students by Mr. John Bishop—and that justly-cited boast of the French *Conservatoire*, the combined system of Rode, Kreutzer, and Baillot*.

* As it is neither hoped nor intended that this chapter should constitute a *gradus*, or complete code of instruction for the young student, I do but hint at a *few* of the streams of information that

Among the consequences of that ambition of display which I have had occasion to refer to as a root of evil among Amateurs, is the tendency to throw off prematurely the salutary restraints of professional aid. This is a mistake of the most injurious kind. The violin, as the most difficult of all instruments, demands more than any other the prolonged assistance of the Master. There is no such being to be met with as a *real* self-taught Violinist. Scrapers and raspers there may be, of various degrees of roughness and wretchedness, who have found out the art of tormenting, *by themselves;* but *that* is quite another matter. Paganini himself, the most wild and singular of players, did not acquire his excellence independently of magisterial rule. He was amply tutored during the early years of his study; and, when he had become a great Master, he still proceeded by calculations founded partly on what he had already been taught, though transcending it in reach and refinement. Let not the aspiring student, therefore, seek to *fly* before he can *run*, and reject the preceptor while his state is essentially that of pupilage. They who, at a very early period, discontinuing the *study* of the instrument, think of playing to *amuse their friends*,

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are open to him. A more extended view of these would result to him from a reference to the printed catalogues of those very diligent purveyors of *pabulum* for auricular purposes, Messrs. Cocks and Co.; but, should he look upon a copious Catalogue as little better than a strange road without a guide, or a labyrinth without a *clue*—and should he have no *live* preceptor at hand, to consult—I would point his attention to an available help from the same quarter, namely, "*Hamilton's Catechism for the Violin*," small in compass as in cost, wherein he will find, briefly indicated, the various steps by which, with due regard to continuous advancement, he should make his way.

will fail inevitably, and be considered as the very reverse of what is agreeable; or, to present the same notable truth at the point of an indifferent epigram:

> *Beginners*, lab'ring at the fiddle,
> Are apt to flounder *in the middle*:
> Such, when our comfort they diminish,
> Are wisely prayed to *make a finish!*

With reference to the *collective* efforts of non-professional players, it may be remarked that, as individual vanity is *there* held in some check, and as something like a pains-taking preparation is customary, the auditor is in a less hazardous condition than where *one* exhibitor has undisputed hold upon him;—besides which, the alternative of an *escape* is more decidedly open. The *single* cacophonist, secretly intending a "polacca," may take you at unawares, after a quiet cup of tea, that has treacherously served to *mask* his purpose. He may suddenly draw his lurking fiddle-case from beneath the very sofa whereon you are at ease—may summon that passive accomplice, his sister, to subservient office at the piano—and, putting his bow-arm into full exercise, bring you to "agony-point," before you have had time to recover from your surprise. From the quartett or symphony-party, on the contrary, you have due notice beforehand; and, if suspicious of discords that are not within the boundary of science, you can decline the invitation, and maintain the tranquillity of your nerves.

The most desirable attainment for confederate Amateurs, next to a familiar acquaintance with their respective instruments, is that *self-knowledge* which enables each to find contentedly his proper place, and ensures that all shall be "correspondent to command, and do their spiriting *gently*." Then, by good discipline, under

the direction of a well-educated musician, whose practical knowledge, added to his intimacy with the compositions of the best masters, gives him a moral influence and authority over an organized body of Amateurs, it is surprising what excellence of effect in musical execution may be produced. It has been sometimes, however, the bane of Amateur Societies to be subject to the control of some unwarrantably officious member, whose musical qualifications in nowise render him a proper person for the assumed dictatorial capacity: or, it may happen that accident brings into the employ of a Society of Amateurs one of those mere practical and executive professional Fiddlers, whose notions of art are only on a level with the quality of their manners. In either case, little benefit, and much less pleasure, is derived from submitting to such directorship. The Amateur, and the Fiddler, will each exercise alike his own weak judgment in the general appeal for the "time" of the music—each (the composer being *least* thought of) preferring the time of an *allegro* in the ratio of its adaptation to his own powers of execution. Of the two, the Professor is the more mischievous, as regards the production of bad consequences. Vain of his advantage over the Amateur, he never neglects to shew it by the rapidity with which he will *time* the quick movements; creating thereby a bad habit in the Amateur, who, to keep up with the first-fiddle, is obliged *so* to scramble through his part, as if it were the purpose of the composer to represent *a race*. A musician with a cultivated mind, on the contrary, whose enthusiasm for art renders "self" a secondary consideration, and whose perseverance has enabled him really to conquer the difficulties of his calling, is sure to effect very great good amongst private Amateurs. His re-

marks on the merits of composers and players are listened to with attention; his authority is respected; and the encouragement he patiently bestows on the ingenuous efforts of the young player, is sure to obtain the utmost confidence of the party.

In the practice of instrumental music, the chief obstacles (besides the difficulty of playing passages in tune and time) are those which attach to *reading*, and to *feeling* the rhythm of the *phrase*, as well as to the executing of passages without *hurry*. Young novices, adults, and bands, are in one common predicament, as to partaking, more or less, of a certain two-fold error—that of producing a disproportionate acceleration of time in a quick and loud passage, and a disproportionate delay in a slow and piano movement. By the advantage of the skilful tact of a clever *maestro*, this error is either altogether corrected, or the tendency is so well kept in check as never to become offensive. In order to conquer the naturally strong influence of rhythmetical impulse in playing, the Amateur should seek every occasion to play with others in concert. The excitement in first playing with other instruments is similar, in its origin, to that of which we have every-day proof in the case of young ladies, who have devoted years of practice to playing the piano-forte, and are yet unable to accompany a song, or solo, in time and with proper feeling—the too common consequence, by the by, of an English musical education. In Germany and France, every lady takes alternate lessons, of her piano-forte master, and of an experienced and well-educated musician, employed in the best orchestras; and thus she imperceptibly loses those impediments which are the consequences of nervous and timid inexperience.

One of the chief advantages of the Professor is his

capacity of reading onwards. Whilst occupied in executing one bar, his eyes and attention are partly bestowed on the three or four subsequent ones—nay, on the next line, and even the next page. All this is best acquired by perusing music, without an instrument. By practice, the eye and mind seize at once the construction of a simple phrase, so that, whilst the operation of playing it is going on, you have time to prepare for the fingering and execution of the following passage, without at once bursting on it, and becoming confused. In overtures and sinfonias, the *time* of the several movements is seldom subject to alteration; and, beyond the mere reading of the passages, the Amateur has only to attend to the various signs used for the modification of sound.

The highest test of the discipline of a band is in playing "piano," and in attacking points of imitation and fugue with vigour. Whatever constitutes the test of the excellence of a band, in execution and effect, applies also to the individual performers.—The coarse, vulgar, pantomime fiddler would make sad havoc in accompanying a trio of Beethoven's, where the most delicately subdued tone, and the most vigorous expression, are alternately required. It must never be forgotten, that the utmost strictness of subordination is an essential requisite in an orchestra. In fact, it is one of the principal merits of a good orchestra-player to practise uniformly this quality of subordination, whereby the perfection of the whole is importantly promoted.

Dramatic music is the most difficult to give effect to; whether it be orchestral, for the action of a ballet, or as an accompaniment to the voice—the license shewn in the numerous changes of a movement, and of time, rendering this species of music by far the most em-

barrassing to both Professor and Amateur. The attention of the performer must here be divided between his instrument, and the singer, or the director; whilst, in other music, his whole soul is wrapt up in his own performance. Hence it follows that, on his first attempt to play opera-music, he is embarrassed at every page! This difficulty is only conquered, like every other, by habitual practice.

In the more advanced stage of his progress, there is nothing so beneficial to the Amateur as to listen, "arrectis auribus," to the performance of genuine classical *quartetts* by accomplished masters of the bow. This will do him far more good than all the *Capriccios* and *Fantasias* with which the most brilliant of the solo-players, or single-handed exhibitors at concerts, can dazzle his discernment. It will exalt his standard of taste, and enlarge his sense of the beautiful—fully directing his perception, at the same time, to the legitimate powers of the violin and its cognate instruments. The remark has been well made by Spohr, that perfect *quartett-playing*, while it requires perhaps less of mechanical skill than is called for in a *concerto*, yet demands more of refined sentiment, taste, and knowledge. No opportunity (adds the same great Master) of joining a good quartett-party, ought to be lost. The occasions afforded for such mode of improvement were for a long while, however, in our English metropolis, as rare as they *might* have been advantageous. The experiments of the London *Concerti da Camera*, and "Quartett Concerts," happily occurred, at length, to test the feeling of our musical circles, and open a new path to the career of the art in this country. Following that new path, and developing further resources to which it led, the "Beethoven Quartett

Society," originated and managed by a Committee of enlightened Amateurs, with the Earl of Falmouth for their President, came into honourable existence in 1845, to render the justice of a too tardy notoriety to some of the most perfect and original of musical compositions, and thereby to erect a higher standard of taste for the benefit of our musical circles. The intentions of this most laudable Association, practically wrought out by Professors of the first ability, have had *some*, at least, of the success that should belong to well-directed ambition*.

With the stimulus and the enlightenment that may be derived from such a school of observation as this, and others to the establishment of which it may possibly lead, is it a thing to be altogether despaired of, that we may hereafter be enabled to enjoy the rational luxury, here as in Germany, of a quartett performed within the *evening family circle*, and competently performed, by its own members? Already, indeed, in some of our provincial towns, there have been examples of a disposition this way†. It is to be hoped that our

* It is noticeable, as among the advantages due to this enterprise, that the text of the great Master, whose name it borrows, has been rescued (so far as relates to his Quartetts) from the numerous *errors* wherewith all the editions were chargeable; and that a new edition, edited by Monsieur Rousselot (through whose labours that purification was mainly accomplished) has been submitted to the public by Messrs. Cocks & Co.

† Among the meritorious doings of provincial Amateurs (albeit *not* in the way of Quartetts), I would here take occasion to mention the Brighton "Choral Society," commenced in 1835, under the zealous management of Mr. H. Woledge, whose funds, as well as his time and talent, were liberally contributed to the undertaking. That social combination, although not continued beyond its third season, has been followed by the Brighton

London Amateurs will no longer be slow to adopt so laudable a practice, nor be deterred from the pleasant advantages of family fiddling by any poor jokes about "the brothers *Bohrer*," or the like. That there is good capacity in them, which occasion may bring out, was made evident at the Musical Festival held at Exeter Hall, towards the end of 1834, as well as at more recent celebrations there. A somewhat large amount of single practice, and more working by *fours*, together with such exercise of observation as has been here alluded to, would develop their capabilities into real means of conferring pleasure upon their friends—whether in the snug and smiling little domestic circle, or in the wider area, and amid the more stimulative accessories, of the hired music-room.

There is a little story, illustrating so pointedly that *love* for his peculiar pursuit, which gives to the Amateur his very *name*, that I cannot resist the temptation to introduce it here. With that little story—and a few special hints to the younger and earlier class of students, conveyed in familiar verse, by way of a spur to the attention—I propose to wind up the present chapter.

A certain Amateur, whose fondness for fiddling was his liveliest passion, had two instruments—his *best*, on which he would by no means have permitted his own father to draw a bow—and his *second best*. In the course of his business, which was commercial, he was preparing to quit England for South America, as supercargo in a certain vessel, and to make a long stay in

"Amateur Symphony Society," which, with Mr. B. Thom for its Leader, and Mr. Woledge as its Secretary, is at this time pursuing its career of recreative euphony. Such Societies as this last, though they do not form quartett-players, can qualify their members to supply, with creditable effect, some of the demands of an orchestra.

the latter country. Concern for his two violins—(he had no *wife*)—was uppermost in his mind. Should he commit them, along with himself, to the perils of the ocean's bosom? Should he, suspending or sacrificing his own enjoyment, leave them behind, in the custody of friendship that might prove fickle, or negligent? Much he pondered—and much hesitated. At length, unable to endure the thoughts of a separation from *both*, he came to a resolution that was, at the same time, a compromise. He determined that he would take with him his *second best*, and tear himself away from his principal darling, his beloved *best—not*, however, to leave it behind—*that* were *quite* too much!—but to export it, highly insured, to the scene of his own destination, in *another* (because, as he conceived it, a *safer*) vessel than that in which he was himself about to embark!

FRIENDLY ADVICE TO THE YOUNG AMATEUR.

First, let a rear-ward *attic* of your labours be the scene—
For, such seclusion best for you (and others) is, I ween.
In comfort, there, assume a chair, and be therein at ease,
And *not* as if, un-garmented, you sat upon *hard pease*.
Your fiddle in sinister hand, and in your right the bow,
Scan, next, the dotted page awhile, or ere *to work* you go.
Firm as a forceps be your wrist, but flexile as an eel!
And—for that struggling shoulder-joint—just teach it to *be still*;
For, mark! the motion of the arm must be 'twixt wrist and elbow,
Or else, howe'er you moil and toil, be sure you'll never *well* bow!
To guide each movement of the bow—to give it vital spring—
To send it bounding on its way—the wrist, the wrist's the thing!
Your bow's relation to the *bridge*, must keep a just right angle,
Or harshly else, and out of tune, your tortured notes will jangle.

From *heel* to *point* that bow now draw, with action slow and steady—
Then back again—and so repeat, till in such practice ready.
The same in quicker time then try—and next proceed to draw
From *middle* (with a shorter scope) to *point*, and back, see-saw.
This, too, in swifter time rehearse;—and then, like justice deal
Unto the other half of bow, from *middle* to the *heel*.

There is a word—too seldom heard—*not* dear to young Ambition—
But wholesome in its discipline,—that word is "*repetition*."
Content to glimmer ere you shine, leap not beyond your bounds!
From small beginnings rise great ends—'tis *pence* that make up *pounds*.
From exercise to exercise, progressive, through your book
Work on—scales, intervals, and all—how *dry* soe'er they look;
Nor jerk forth scraps, or odds and ends, of ev'ry tune that floats;—
Can any foolery be worse than scatt'ring of *loose notes*?

Let not thy steps untutored move! A master's ready skill
For safety and for succour seek, to curb or point thy will!
Plain work precedes all *ornament:* keep graces for a late
Achievement, since you first must *build*, ere you can *decorate*.
Think *elegance* a pretty thing, but *breadth* a vast deal better;
Nor, for the sake of lesser charms, your larger movements fetter.
It is the pride of players great, a free and dashing *bow*,
As, borne along on waves of sound, to their success they go!

Corelli old, contemn thou not! Substantial, good, and plain,
He's like a round of British beef—he's "cut-and-come-again!"
But, as the interval is wide, you need not—*nota bene*—
You need not travel *all* the road 'twixt *him* and *Paganini*.

In fiddle-practice, as in life, are difficulties *gifts*?
Yes—*double stops* are just the thing to drive thee to thy *shifts*!
"Bating no jot of heart or hope," toil, till, in time's process,
The music that is in thy soul, thy fiddle shall express!

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VIOLIN.

It is a very natural curiosity which engages us to look minutely into the structural peculiarities of that which is a medium for awakening pleasurable sensations within us. The balloon that has borne us aloft into aerial altitudes—and the violin that, under the management of a Vieuxtemps or a Sivori, has transported us, through varying acoustic currents, into the sublimer regions of harmony—are, each, the object of a close and willingly conceded attention.

Quitting the balloon, however, and confining ourselves to the violin—*what* (let us enquire) are the component parts that make up the "form and pressure," the "complement extern" and *in*tern, of this material ministrant to our joys and sympathies;—*what*, also, are the several most remarkable patterns, or models, of the *completed* instrument;—and *who* were the originators, respectively, of those varieties of conformation? This latter point of enquiry will lead us to advert, before concluding this chapter, to certain innovations that have been attempted, with more or less felicity, in our own days.

A curious little work on the Construction, Preservation, Repair, &c. of the Violin, written in German by Jacob Augustus Otto, appeared in 1817, and was translated into English some years afterwards. The author, himself an instrument-maker, professes to have studied "music, mathematics, physics, and acoustics," which respectable preparation certainly adds not a little to his claims to attention, in undertaking to be instructive. It may be worth while here to present, in a condensed form, some portion of his matter, which is both indicative and preceptive. Such of my readers as, with a stronger impulse of curiosity, may desire to possess the *whole* of the information furnished by his treatise, are referred to the latest English edition of it, which, supplied with an appendix by the translator, Mr. John Bishop, has been issued by the publishers of the present work.

Otto states that the Violin, when complete, consists of *fifty-eight* different parts—a fact, by the by, which the ordinary observer would be little inclined to suspect*, and of which, indeed, many a good player is probably not aware. The author makes general complaint, indeed, of the ignorance on the part of many Violinists of celebrity, as to the construction of the instrument. Then, as to the *wood*—for, "ex *quovis ligno* non fit Mercurius;" that is to say, a fellow so mercurial as your fiddle is not to be created out of any chance piece of timber;—the wood that is generally used is of three sorts: sycamore for the back, neck, sides and circles: Tyrolese soft red deal for the belly,

* When twenty-four bits, instead of twelve, are used for the *purfling*, and when the *tail-piece* is made of *two* bits, the total number of pieces extends to *seventy-one!*

bass-bar, sound-post, and six internal blocks: and ebony for the finger-board and tail-piece. The greatest care and judgment, it seems, are requisite in the selection of the material for the *belly* of the instrument, on which its *tone* entirely depends. The wood for this purpose is prescribed to be cut only in December or January, and only that part to be used which has been exposed to the sun.

As to the *Cremonas* (a word of fondest association to all votaries of the violin!), the oldest of them are those from the hands of *Hieronymus* (or Jerome) *Amati*, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, or rather earlier. Next come those of *Antonius Amati*, belonging to the middle of that century; and then those of *Nicholas Amati*, towards the end of it. To these makers are to be added *Antonius Straduarius*, and afterwards (at the commencement of the eighteenth century) *Joseph Guarnerius*. All these men of Cremona, so renowned for the products of their ingenuity were (according to M. Otto), *mathematical* builders, and nice observers of the proportions best calculated for imparting a full, powerful, sonorous tone. The instruments by the three Amati are rather higher, or less flat, in the model, than those of Straduarius. Of all the Italian Violins, Hieronymus Amati's are the handsomest in shape, and the best in make. They are now more than two centuries and a half old, strongly constructed, and likely to retain their excellence another century. Nicholas Amati's are of rather small size, and somewhat abrupt in the swell of the form. The instruments of Straduarius are most esteemed by *Concert* performers for the power of their tone. Those of Guarnerius are beautifully constructed, and with a good deal of similarity to those of Nicholas Amati.

The fine *Tyrolese* instruments—those of the celebrated *Jacob Steiner*—differ much from the *Cremonese*, both in shape and tone. In the latter respect, they are of sharper and more penetrating quality. The *later* Tyrolese makers have been rendered the great source of deception by dealers, &c.—their instruments having been made to pass as classics. The best among them are those of Klotz. The Tyrolese imitations of the Steiners and Cremonese are chiefly distinguishable by the coarse and wide grain of the deal, and by the thin spirit varnish upon them, instead of the Italian strong amber varnish.

The author treats individually of the principal German makers. *Statelmann*, of Vienna, of high fame as a studious maker, was a close imitator of Jacob Steiner; as were also *Withalm* of Nuremberg, and *Riess* of Bamberg. The flat model of Straduarius has been imitated by *Buckstädter* of Ratisbon, and *Jauch* of Dresden. *Martin Hoffman*, and *Hunger*, both of Leipsic, were excellent as tenor-makers, and good in violins. The instruments by *Eberle* of Prague, one of the most celebrated German makers, are like the Cremonese, but less round and full in their tone. *Bachmann* of Berlin, also very eminent, was strictly careful as to proportions.

Against the class of *repairers* in general, as so many botchers, tinkers, and spoilers, the author is emphatically severe; and he points the especial finger of scorn at one *Kirchlag*, who, about 1787, made a visit of destruction, under pretence of repair, to most of the towns in Germany.

Instruments, it appears, should be sufficiently *well-timbered*; their durability is much affected when they are finished off too weak in wood. The bass-bar and

sound-post are not inserted to strengthen the instrument (as many have supposed), but to increase the vibration. The vibratory principle, according to M. Otto, has been as yet but imperfectly investigated, and is little understood. Recent experiments, however, have somewhat further extended our knowledge of it. Great nicety is requisite as to the erection and proportions of the *bridge:* when it is too high, the effect is a dull tone, difficult to be brought out—when too low, a shrill sharp, and thin tone. In good instruments, the sound-post stands half an inch below the left foot of the bridge: in defective ones, it may be placed rather nearer, to increase the strength, and assist the tone. The screw-holes must not be rubbed with rosin to tighten them: the best appliance is chalk. Some wise-acres pretend that a violin is to be improved in tone by breaking it to pieces, and mending it again! Others disturb and shift about the bridge and sound-post, till the tone is almost gone. Others again, with a taste worthy of Hottentots, have daubed over the "belly part" with a coat of glue, mixed with powdered glass; and some there are, who have tampered with instruments by an absurd plaster of varnish and white of eggs, under the unwholesome idea of closing up the pores! It is suggested that *flies* should not be allowed to introduce themselves into the *f* holes. (Children say, by the by, that *f* "*stands for fly:*" and, in the case in question, it stands *open;* so there seems, at least, a pretty good excuse for the intruders.) The inside of the instrument is to be cleaned out once in six months, by means of a handful of barley, made warm, poured in at these *f* holes, and well shaken. The best *strings* are those from Milan (called Roman), which are clear and transparent as glass, and should have as much recoil, when opened out, as a watch-

spring. A very important article of requirement is good refined rosin: the common brown rosin of commerce is quite unfit, because of its thickness and clamminess.

The author, deflecting entirely from the prevalent notion on the subject, asserts that it is not *age*, but constant *use*, that is the means of producing a smooth, clear tone. He lays it down as a position, which he has himself verified in various experiments, that *any* instrument is to be greatly improved by working at it daily for three months together, with a strong bow—taking two tones at a time, fourths or fifths. This method of improvement, it is clear, must be somewhat costly, and infinitely tedious—but it is much recommended by our author. Hapless indeed must be the condition of the human being destined to labour at fourths and fifths, with a strong bow, for three months together! If such a system were introduced among *us*, it is to be feared that the announcement of "Improvers wanted" would frequently be made in vain. What (we may ask) would become of the *intellects* of a human being *so* employed? As for the reason *why* so beneficial an effect belongs to this peculiar practice, M. Otto has declined unfolding it—his "duty to his family" forbidding such divulgement.

Thus far, Jacob Augustus Otto—dismissing whom, with thanks for the information picked out of him, we proceed to other details, derived from other sources.

To the names of the *Amati* family already mentioned, should be added that of *Andreas*, brother of Nicholas. These two brothers, as well as the other makers in that family, constructed instruments of a soft and rich tone, but deficient in the *brilliancy* which modern players regard as so great a requisite. They

(the two above specified) supplied, about the year 1570, some violins of large pattern for the chamber-music of Charles IX, King of France, which are remarkable for beauty of shape, and nicety of finish.

Contemporary with Andreas and Nicholas Amati, was *Gaspar de Salo*, of Lombardy. He was especially renowned for his instruments of the *viol* species, at that time more in request than violins. His instruments of this latter kind, somewhat larger in pattern, have more power than those of the Amati; but their tone has been said to be too analogous to that of the *tenor*. Of a similar quality are the violins of *Giovanni Granzino*, who operated at Milan, from about 1612 to 1635.

Another noted Italian fabricator, whose doings come within about the same range of time as those of Granzino, was *Giovanni Paolo Magini*, who established his factory at his native town, Brescia. Magini's violins are usually large, although he produced a few of small pattern. Their convexity is very positive; and the back is a good deal flattened towards its upper and lower extremities. The sides are softened off, at the various points of angular projection. A broad double fillet sweeps round the belly and back, and, on the latter, sometimes terminates in an ornament, situated near the neck of the instrument, and having the shape of a large clover-leaf. He made use of spirit-varnish, of a fine golden colour. The tone of his violins, less soft than that of a Straduarius, and less potent than a Guarnerius, approaches that of the *viol*, and has in its character a touch of melancholy. Magini's instruments came (or rather, returned) into high consideration some years ago, from the fact of De Beriot's having adopted the custom of playing on one of them. There are but few of them in existence. One, that was pretty loud in

tone, was sold, years ago, by an ingenious fiddle-fancier at Kensington, to Reeve, principal "Second Violin" at the Italian Opera House. It had been long in the possession of old Baumgarten, who was orchestra-leader at Covent Garden for forty years, and died at Kensington Gravel-pits.

From about the middle of the seventeenth to that of the eighteenth century, the Italian renown for instrument-making attained its climax by the productions of those two Cremonese "men of pith," *Straduarius* and *Guarnerius* —or, to give them their local names, *Antonio Stradivari*, and *Giuseppe Guarneri*. Violins—tenors—basses —all was admirable, that came from their hands; but they are distinguished from each other by qualities that are sufficiently appreciable. In the large Concert-hall, the Guarnerius has the greater sonorous power; while, for the combination of brilliancy with suavity, nothing can equal, in a private music-room (and especially where a *quartett* is in hand), a well-conditioned Straduarius.

Born in 1664, and employed for years in the factory of the *Amati*, Straduarius began his own separate career, by imitating their models; but, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, taking leave of his masters, he changed the proportions of his instruments—adopted a larger size, with a diminished convexity—and was as studious about the gradations of thickness, as in the choice of his wood. Nothing was omitted, that the careful mind of this artist could devise, for the production of the finest quality of tone. His instruments, nicely-balanced, provoke no unseemly opposition of character among the four strings. Add to these advantages, a graceful outline—high finish in the details—a brilliant harmony in the varnish—and

you have the accomplished, the complete *Straduarius.*

Giuseppe (*Joseph*) *Guarnerius*, the most distinguished among a family noted for the construction of bowed instruments, belongs, in date of birth, to the latter end of the seventeenth century. He is said to have studied his art in the factory of Straduarius, although the products of his hand shew none of the high finish characteristic of that maker. His *build* is often very slovenly; the *f* holes are cut almost straight, and with angularity about the ends; the fillets are badly traced—and, indeed, there is so little in the *look* of his violins to proclaim the master, that one might be tempted to attribute their fine quality to the excellence of the materials he used, rather than to any bestowed workings of his mind. Close examination, however, has decided that he must have been guided by some positive principles, howsoever attained, and that his productions have an originality derived from these. Of his violins of the large pattern, there are but few: those of the smaller size, which are more numerous, exhibit very little convexity, and are thicker, in the thick parts, than those of Straduarius. The effect of his instruments is more gratifying at a little distance, than at "close quarters."

The art under consideration seems to have gone on in Italy with hardly any change, since the time of the above two celebrated makers — their successors having been content with one or the other of them, for model. *Lorenzio Guadagnini*, of Placentia, a pupil or apprentice of Straduarius, copied the small-pattern fiddles of his master. His instruments give a round and clear tone from the first and second strings—but are dull on the third. He had a son, who worked at

Milan, till about 1770, after his father's mode, but with smaller success. The *Gagliani* were also imitators of Straduarius, but were far from equalling his instruments, and were not very scrupulous in their selection of wood. *Ruggeri* and *Alvani*, who were among the copyists of Joseph Guarnerius, have produced good violins, but none that could attain the estimation enjoyed by their prototype.

Of the noted Tyrolese fiddle-fabricants, *Jacob Steiner*, a man of chequered fortunes, was the ingenious chief. Born about 1620, at Absom, a village near Inspruck, he had, as an instrument-maker, a career marked by three distinct epochs. At first, under the Amati at Cremona, he produced some violins of admirable finish, but now very rarely to be met with. Their convexity is still more decided than that of the Amati; while the heads, or volutes, are less prolonged, and broader in the anterior part—and the labels within them are written and signed by the artist's own hand. His *second* epoch is when, married, and settled at Absom, he produced, from 1650 to 1667, a prodigious number of instruments, constructed with little care. Even then, however, after languishing for some years in misery, and personally hawking about his violins, for which he could get no better price than six florins, he regained his position through some rays of aristocratic patronage that suddenly shone upon him; and, with his genius thus revived, again produced some fine instruments, distinguished by their scrolls, ornamented with heads of animals—by the close fibres of the belly-wood —and by the varnish of red mahogany-colour, browned by time. Steiner's *third* epoch commences when, on losing his wife, he retired to a monastery. In that tedious seclusion, he resolved to signalize the end of his

artistic career by some first-rate doings. Having obtained, through the influence of the Superior, a supply of most exemplary wood, he made sixteen violins—the intended concentrations of every gathered perfection—and sent one to each of the twelve Electors of the Empire, presenting to the Emperor himself the remaining four. These sixteen instruments, whereof but three are (so far as is known) extant, have acquired the name of *Elector Steiners*. A pure, ringing, ethereal tone, comparable to that of a woman's perfect voice—a shape of elegance—studied finish in every detail—a diaphanous varnish, of golden hue—such are the characteristics of these productions of Steiner's third, or last epoch. Their labels, unlike those of his second period, which are printed, bear his autograph inscription and signature.

The imitations of the instruments of Steiner by the brothers *Klotz* have reference to his second epoch, and are distinguishable from his own manufacture by the varnish, which, instead of being red, is of a dark body, with a tinge of yellow. From the pupils of the Klotzes, likewise, have resulted numerous Tyrolese imitations of the Cremona patterns—but always discernible by the inferior quality of the wood, by the duskiness of the varnish, and the want of clearness and power in the tone.

The high market-value borne by the best instruments of the best Italian and Tyrolese makers, is a point well known to those who take a particular interest in the violin. It has formed the subject of admiration to all, of exultation to a few, and of disappointment to many. The money that would buy a house, has been sometimes demanded for a fiddle! The subjoined passage from Mr. Gardiner's "Music and Friends,"

will serve (among other purposes) to illustrate in some degree this exorbitancy :—

"Mr. Champion, an Amateur, had just purchased a Stradivari violin and tenor (in one case), for which he gave three hundred guineas. They seemed to have been untouched since the day they were made. They were of a beautiful yellow colour, inclining to orange, and appeared to have ripened and mellowed into excellence. Mr. Salomon's violin was the celebrated one that belonged to Corelli, with his name elegantly embossed in large capital letters on the ribs. Probably three such valuable Cremonas were never before brought together. There can be no question that the instruments made by Stradivari are superior to those of any other Maker in the world. Dragonetti's double-bass was made by the same artist. Mr. Salomon, the Jew, has offered him eight hundred guineas for it; but he will not part with it for less than a thousand."

As in their own country, so in others, the great Italian and German Makers have had their "servum pecus," their crowd of imitative followers, who have sometimes copied with a plausible neatness, and sometimes caricatured with a coarse barbarity. The most prominent names in France are, successively, those of *Bocquay*, *Pierret*, *Despons*, *Véron*, *Guersan*, *Castagnery*, *Saint-Paul*, *Salomon*, *Médard*, *Lambert* (whose rough and ready doings got for him the name of "*Le Charpentier* de la Lutherie"), *Saunier*, *Picte* (whose instruments were given as prizes to the pupils of the Paris Conservatory, at the commencement of the present century)—and, lastly, *Lupot*, a studious artist, whose instruments, finished with a loving care, have a real value in the eyes of the discerning, and are in request where a good Cremona is unattainable. For one

of Lupot's best instruments, an offer equal to sixty guineas has been known to be refused.—Of the English Constructors, a scanty knowledge limits me to a slender account. *Richard Duke*, who belongs to the middle of the last century, flourished in Red Lion Street, near Gray's Inn Passage. The *Forsters*, old and young, grandfather and grandson, have, in their department of art, a name that lives. *Banks*, of Salisbury, also claims notice. His violoncellos (observes Mr. Gardiner) are of the finest quality of tone—not so strong and fiery as old Forster's, but, in sweetness and purity, excelling them. Banks's are more adapted to the chamber, and Forster's to the orchestra. The names of *Betts*, *Davis*, *Corsby*, *Kennedy*, and *Hart* (all London Makers) are likewise entitled to respect.

Although the great Italian and German Constructors, who have so long served as models and guides, did unquestionably somehow arrive at certain proportions highly favourable to the development of beautiful sound, it does not appear that those proportions, observed (as they were) with mathematical exactness, were founded upon any clearly understood philosophic principles. "Until recently," says Monsieur Fétis, from whose ingenious labours are derived some of the details in this chapter, "the art of making bowed instruments has perceptibly been cultivated, in turn, by inspiration, and imitation. Science, as an element, did not enter into their construction. We have now reached an epoch of transformation in this respect, though perhaps rather, as yet, in the way of establishing principles, than of attaining results." Into this subject, it behoves us to enter with some particularity.

At about the same time as that of the publication of Otto's little book in Germany, an ingenious Frenchman

made known the results of some experiments he had undertaken with reference to the *principles* of construction. *M. Chanot,* officer of maritime engineers, and amateur of music, professed to have discovered a method for determining invariably the processes to be employed in the construction of bow-played instruments.

His views are contained in a Memorial addressed to the French Academy, during its sitting of the 27th of May, 1817. This memorial was submitted to the consideration of the musical section of the Academy, to whose labours, in making the investigation required by the committee, were added those of MM. Charles and De Prony.

The first part of this memorial advocated the division of the *Monochord,* so as to split the interval between the key-note and its octave into twelve equal semi-tones. The short algebraic formula employed by M. Chanot was found correct. Thus, a violin with a finger-board graduated after this method, like the finger-board of a guitar, would be fit to accompany all instruments which make no difference between the sharp and flat through the enharmonic division. But the imperfection of these instruments precisely consists in this equality: to confine the violin to the same limits, would therefore be to deprive it of its superiority over them. The committee accordingly disapproved of this innovation, and M. Chanot renounced it with readiness.

The second and most important part of the memorial points out the ordinary construction of the grooved violin, with a view to produce more sonorous vibrations, or to multiply the vibrations in the fibres of the wood, and to obtain, as an accessary, a greater degree of solidity in the body of the instrument. Projecting edges and grooves were employed in the new example,

and the angles covered with hard wood, in order to resist concussions. This simple form enables the maker to employ one single piece for the side curvatures, and to dispense with the use of blocks, which diminish the general elasticity. This construction was considered favorable to the production of some vibrations which otherwise would not exist. M. Chanot chiefly attributed the sonorous quality, in the vibrations of his new violin, to the method of cutting the sounding-board;—to the form of the parallel holes on each side, which were made to approximate as closely as possible to the curvatures, and were therefore straighter than what are called the *f* holes:—to the situation of the bar in the centre of the sounding-board, in the form of a splint—and likewise to the geometrical cutting of the instrument.

In consequence of these supposed improvements, there were, in an equal degree of thickness, many more vibrating fibres than usual, under the immediate pressure of the bridge. To give to the holes of common violins the form of the letter *f*, was regarded by M. Chanot as generally bad. The turnings of this letter render it necessary to *cut* a considerable number of *fibres*, which no longer vibrate under the immediate pressure of the bridge; whilst, in the *new* violin, without augmenting the mass of fibres, the parallel holes on the sides allowed the attainment of the maximum of the vibrations.

The memorialist insisted on a certain simple principle, as having been confirmed by various positive experiments; namely, that the *long* fibres are favorable to the production of *low* tones, and the shorter fibres to the production of *high* tones. This, he said, should be the guiding principle in the construction of instruments such as the violin. By fixing the sounding-post at the

back of the bridge, the fibres of the sounding-board are divided into two arcs, instead of being cut in two on the side of the E string. This division is necessary, because, the high tones being produced on that side, the bridge acts on the shorter arcs like a small lever, whilst, on the side of the large strings, the fibres are enabled to vibrate in the long arcs necessary to produce low tones.

This explanation of the play or action of the instrument is rendered probable by the experiment of placing the sounding-post behind the foot of the bridge, on the side of the thicker strings. These, as well as the E string, then exhibit a greatly diminished power of sound, and the tone of the instrument is considerably damped. It was supposed, therefore, that M. Chanot's new model, from the fact of its possessing in its texture a greater number of long arcs for producing deep tones, as well as of short ones for high tones, must produce, under a parity of size and principal dimensions, a more powerful effect than the violin of the usual construction, and must be better calculated for the performance of *sostenuto* passages.

This theory, founded on principles *apparently* satisfactory, received such confirmation from direct experiment as was held, by the French Committee, to establish the superiority of the structure of the *new* violin over all others. The ordeal resorted to was a hazardous one. Monsieur Boucher, the eminent player, was requested to bring to the sitting one of the best *Straduarius* instruments: and, to counteract any effect unfavourable to impartiality of decision, that might arise from the notorious prepossession existing for these fine violins, M. Boucher stepped into an adjoining apartment, and there played alternately the same passages on both instruments.

The whole committee, during three successive experiments, thought they were listening to the Straduarius, whilst M. Boucher was playing on the new violin, and, *vice versâ*, supposed he was playing on the new instrument, when it was otherwise. This repeated mistake—this double illusion—was considered by the Academy to decide the question in favour of M. Chanot's violin, which, though made of new wood, partly of two years and partly of six months' cut, sustained so perilous a competition in the manner described.

Thus, the mystification of the "authorities" was complete—but not so the ulterior success of the innovation, for it found no favour among the musical profession, and soon became a thing of the past. It amounted, in fact, to little more than a return to the old discarded viol shape of the middle ages, with its flatness of face and back, and its less indented outline.

A similar fate to that which attended M. Chanot's attempt, followed the first experiments of *M. Savart*, who soon afterwards devised, and with his own hand executed, another example of new construction, on principles which he considered philosophic. Flatness of surface, and straightness of line, were by him also adopted, instead of the curve and flow, which give beauty and distinction to the instrument in ordinary use; while the cross-bar and sounding-post were altered in position, and the two holes or perforations on the face were cut in straight parallel lines, instead of the graceful *f* form. A more perfect and equable vibration was supposed by M. Savart to result from these new arrangements, and success was claimed for the innovation; but an interval of what seemed more like failure, was observed to take place, until, abandoning his advocacy of an ugly, bluff, box-like pattern, and returning to the beautiful and

classic proportions of Straduarius, M. Savart wisely entered into association with an intelligent practical man, *Vuillaume*, of Paris, a musical instrument-maker. Then—the long-studied and well-digested acoustic theories of the man of science being brought into operation, and tested in experience, by the skilful man of art, a brighter result was obtained—so much brighter, indeed, that there seems little reasonable doubt of its being possible, henceforward, to produce any required number of instruments, equal in primitive merit to those of the great Italian Constructors, and only awaiting the indispensable accession of *time*, for the consummation of their value; nor are we much disposed to charge Monsieur Fétis with madness, when, under a lively sense of what has been already achieved by Savart and Vuillaume, he points exultingly to Paris, as the Cremona of the nineteenth century!

Into those deductions, drawn from his study of the phenomena of sound, which became to Savart the guiding principles towards the right construction of bowed instruments, it were too long here to enter;—but our English Makers would do well to look into those principles, as detailed in the French scientific journal, "L'Institut"—and to consider curiously the practical result, as shewn in the handy-work of Vuillaume, whose instruments, to the number of more than two thousand, have gone forth into the world, to attest the value of the system that has guided his operations.

The adventures of this indefatigable mechanician, in quest of *wood* for his purpose,—wood of sufficient age and capable of giving out the proper *pitch* of sound—might fill a chapter. He ransacked Switzerland, entering into the meanest of her hovels, and buying-up the furniture or the wood-work of the *châlets*, wherever

he could detect in it the right resonance, "les conditions d'une bonne sonorité." He one day went so far as to persuade the curate of a small parish to let him take away the cieling of his sitting-room, and replace it by another. Making his way back to Paris with his "strange-achievéd heap"—his wooden wealth—he forthwith betook himself to the completion of certain machinery, by means of which, as it is asserted, he is enabled to form and hollow out, at will, a "belly" of Straduarius, of Guarnerius, of Amati, or of Magini—with a nicety which the hand, at its very best, can never accomplish. Resolved to omit nothing, he studied finally the varieties of *varnish*, till he hit upon the exact reflex of that clear, bright, most self-commendatory super-fusion, which we observe as the crowning grace of the fine old instruments.

Of the marvellous accuracy, as a copyist of the old models, that was attained years since by Vuillaume, there is amusing proof, in a story related by M. Fétis, on the authority of the great Violinist himself, who figures in it:—

"On his return-journey from a visit to England, Paganini, with dismay, observed the case containing his admirable *Guarnerius* to fall from the roof of the diligence. The instrument had sustained manifest injury;—but Vuillaume was in Paris; and Paganini, fixing on *him* all his hopes, entrusted his violin to him, on descending from the vehicle. The repairs were made with all the care demanded by the beauty of the instrument, and the immense talent of its owner. Every minutest trace of the accident was obliterated—and that which had been the confidant of Paganini's inspirations was restored to its full charm and power. Whilst yet the depositary of so excellent an instrument, Mon-

sieur Vuillaume was tempted by opportunity to make a copy of it—*such* a copy as nobody might distinguish from the original. On the day appointed for putting the renowned performer again in possession of his instrument, Vuillaume went to him, and, placing two violins on the table, thus addressed him: "I have so completely succeeded in obliterating every vestige of the accident sustained by your fiddle, as to be quite unable to distinguish it from the *other* Guarnerius, now beside it, which has been entrusted to me, and which bears a striking resemblance to it. *You*, who are well acquainted with your own instrument, will relieve me from this embarrassment." At these words, Paganini changed countenance—stood up in haste—seized a fiddle with each hand—scrutinized and compared them both—and was struck dumb by their perfect similitude. *One* hope remains;—he snatches up his bow—sends it dancing alternately over the strings of the two instruments—draws prodigies from each. Instead of dissipating his anxiety, this experiment does but increase it. He strides about the room—his hands are clenched—his eyes are on fire! Vuillaume's triumph had reached its acme. "Compose yourself," said he,—"*here* is your violin!—and *there*—is the *copy* I have made of it. Keep them *both*, as memorials of this adventure—and think, sometimes, on the *restorer* of your instrument!"

Fortunately, the probity of Monsieur Vuillaume is known to equal his talent; *else* were imitation, by so cunning an artificer, a very ticklish thing. Instruments of his, in fact, *have* been bought and sold, by musical-instrument-makers themselves, as those of Straduarius, or Guarnerius: law-proceedings have resulted; and Vuillaume's own invoked testimony has established, by

certain undetected private marks, that *he* was the real author of the instruments in question.

The services rendered to the musical community by the successful labours of Vuillaume, will be best appreciated by those who bear in mind the commercial rarity of the genuine old instruments, and the difficult prices at which it is usual to value them. Their acquisition, in fact, belongs rigidly to the rich; and it often occurs that the best part of an artist's life has gone by, before his savings have enabled him to possess that which is wanted for the full manifestation of his talent. The substitutes presented by the hand of the modern Frenchman, bear a price somewhat analogous to the modesty of merit itself. Of their real value, the recent "Great Exhibition" in our metropolis gave connoisseurs the opportunity to form some estimate; and the conclusion arrived at is sufficiently denoted by the awarded gold medal. Specimens creditable to the skill of our English Makers, though not resulting from the like diligent investigation into principles, were also displayed on the above-named grand occasion. The names of Betts, Purdy and Fendt, and Simon Forster, occur in connection with these. Examples claiming notice on the convenient score of *cheapness*, too, were not wanting among the foreign instruments there exhibited. The best of these were from the Tyrol—while others were of the workmanship of Mericourt, in the Vosges, a place which has been denominated the *Manchester* of musical instrument-making—and not without some show of reason, seeing that, for about four shillings, it supplies the fiddler with a complete instrument, strings and bow included! In the way of "a bargain," surely nothing can beat *this;* unless, indeed, they were to throw in *the case!*

The latest improvement attempted in construction, is, I understand, a discovery patented by an American. It is designed to give greater freedom to the *vibration*, by omitting the end (or top and bottom) blocks, and substituting an extra bass-bar, which runs longitudinally in contiguity to the back, but without touching it.

The possession of a good *bow* may be readily conceived to be a matter of no slight importance. With whatever reason the art of making violins may be considered (with the exceptions noticed in this chapter) to have declined since the days of the old makers, it is certain that the *bow* has been altered much for the better: so much, indeed, as to seem hardly susceptible of further improvement. The bows of Tourte, of Paris, have acquired a European celebrity. Their superiority lies in their diminished weight, with increased elasticity in the stick; in the beautiful uniformity of their bend, which is so regulated as to cause the nearest approach made by the stick to the hair to be exactly in the middle, between the head and the nut; and in the very exact and finished workmanship of the whole. Here, too, acknowledgment is due to the ability of Vuillaume, who has contrived a bow in which two inconveniences, attendant on the previous method, are remedied; so that the hand of the performer is no longer disturbed by those variations in the length, and consequently in the weight, of the stick, which arose from the necessity of making the thumb to follow the shiftings of the nut, whenever the bow was altered as to its tension; while the hair, firmly fixed to a kind of cylindrical nippers, is so arranged as to form a perfectly even surface throughout its length, and to be renewable by the performer himself, when he may desire it.

Let me point the termination of this chapter with

a bit of cautionary advice, which, though it concerns bodies politic, invalids, and picture-owners, is not the less suited to the possessors of valuable instruments that require, through some casualty, the aid of a restorative hand :—

BEWARE of *Vampers!*

If, in some unhappy, incautious moment, you confide your cherished *Steiner* or *Stradivari* to the barbaric hands of one of these profane pretenders, its recovery is hopeless—its constitution is gone!

CHAPTER X.

MISCELLANEOUS ANECDOTES, COLLECTED SCRAPS, ECCENTRIC VARIETIES, ETC.

"Quæ quibus ante-feram?"

Characteristics of the Fiddle Species. — In the *variety* of expression, as well as in its *quality*, the violin has often been signalized for its approximation to the human voice. The *finesse* of perception of a clever woman has discovered in that remarkable instrument, and its ligneous family, a yet closer approach to human character. The ingenious parallels which this lady has drawn are described by Monsieur Beyle, in a passage which I here translate from his curious and amusing work on Haydn and Mozart.—"In listening to the quartetts of Haydn, this lady felt as if present at a conversation held by four agreeable persons. She found in the *First Violin* the semblance of a man of considerable intelligence, of the middle time of life, an accomplished talker, and equally capable of sustaining the conversation, as of furnishing the subject of it. In the *Second Violin*, she recognized a *friend* of the First, who endeavoured by every possible method to draw out his brilliant qualities,—was rarely occupied about *himself*,—and kept up the discourse rather by his approba-

tion of what fell from the others, than by advancing any ideas of his own. The *Tenor* was a solid, profound, and sententious personage, who gave support to the remarks of the First Violin, by maxims of a laconic turn, but of striking truth. As for the *Violoncello*, 'twas a good woman, of a somewhat babbling inclination, who said nothing to signify overmuch, but yet would not be without her share in the conversation. She contributed a certain grace to it, however, and, whilst she was talking, the other interlocutors got time to breathe! One thing, with respect to her, was not difficult to discover—namely, that she cherished a secret bias for the *Tenor*, and gave him the preference over his instrumental brethren."

If these comparisons should appear too fanciful, let it be remembered that the subject is inviting, and might even be carried a good deal further. We should only wonder that Monsieur Beyle's clever female friend, having contrived to make up so snug a little party, did not still further develop their capabilities, and explain, "avec circonstance," the *matter* of their amiable chit-chat. *Why* she should have chosen, by the by, to assign to the *Violoncello* the feminine gender, is by no means obvious. According to the general rules of proportion, which govern sex, it would be otherwise. Perhaps the creation of that instrument subsequently to the fiddle, as a help-mate to it, may have suggested this notion to our speculatist; but, *n'importe;* let us be content, rather than differ with a lady, to allow personification under the softer sex to the instrument in question, which may then figure characteristically, like one of Byron's heroines, as

"Somewhat large, and languishing, and lazy."

Apropos of personification—a curious little pamphlet, of a dozen pages only, but containing some ingenious turns of fancy, was printed by Dove, in 1828, from the pen of a Mr. K——, a gentleman of refined taste in various matters of art and literature. It is entitled, "Carluccio and Signora Violina; a musical *jeu d'esprit* for the benefit of Violinists, in the manner of Lucian;" and it consists of a sort of dialogue between a lover and his mistress—the latter being represented by the Violin. In assigning the feminine gender to the instrument, the author thus accounts for the innovation he has hazarded:—"We have *Viola* in Shakspeare, and *Viola* in music. Why not, then, *Violina*—especially as her voice is treble?"

Sit juvenis quondam, nunc fœmina.—*Virg.*

To the foregoing hints on distinctive peculiarities among the Fiddle tribe, I am tempted to add a few words about the two extremes that constitute, respectively, the *giant* and the *dwarf* of the race; namely, the *double-bass* (or *contra-basso*) and the *kit*. The former of these, then—the double-bass—is a fellow of imposing appearance, with the weight and strength of an Ajax, and a voice that you might conceive him to have borrowed from a thunder-cloud. In the assembled circle, he is dogmatical, slow, and heavy; yet one is forced to confess that there is a *depth* in all he utters, and that what he wants in brilliancy, is amply made up in profundity. He hears the *flourishes* of those around him, but seems to take little heed of them—and sometimes makes a solemn pause, as if in meditation, while the rest are chattering away. His manner, even when he perfectly *agrees* with what is advanced by others, has a bluffness in it, that is not *very* unlike *dissent*. His arguments are of the sledge-hammer kind, knock-

ing down contradiction. He is the Doctor Johnson of the society—he settles matters with a *growl.* With all his surliness, however, he is a thoroughly good fellow at bottom; and, as he is well-understood, and pretty much humoured, by his associates, the general harmony is none the worse for his presence—nay, rather, would be very sensibly subtracted from, were he absent.—As for the *kit,* he is a pert little whipper-snapper, with a voice as *uppish* as his notions of *himself,* and a figure *any thing* but *symmetrical,* since it is, at once, by an odd contrariety, stunted in height, and lanky in appearance. He is hardly ever seen in the company of his own kith and kin, his own fraternity of the larger growth—for his vanity leads him to seek distinction on *any* terms, and so he goes into dancing academies, or among family step-hop-and-jump-learners, where he is a sort of cock-of-the-walk, and where, to judge from the quaint and abruptly intermitted strains that proceed from him, he seems to crow and chuckle at the absurdities of the "awkward squad" whom he delights to set in motion. As he is prone to imitation, and proud of his squeaking voice, you will sometimes hear him mimic the style and accents of his bigger brethren, behind their backs; but these attempts incline you only to a smile—which he mistakes for approbation. On the whole, though tolerated, he is never respected. The very person who *introduces* him into such society as that just mentioned, makes a mere convenience of him; but, because he is usually carried thither in the *pocket* of his introducer, he fancies himself, forsooth, a prodigious pet! Was there ever such impudence?

If there be, by a strange possibility, any special admirers of the Pigmy, who shall think him too sharply dealt with in the above sketch, let them turn for com-

fort to Sir John Hawkins, in whose pages they will find mention of a certain London dancing-master, named Pemberton, who was so consummate a handler of the kit, as to be able to play entire *solos* on it, and to exhibit in his performance (so declares the statement) *all* the graces and elegancies of *the violin*, although himself a man of the most corpulent make! Besides this consolatory reference, let me hint to the affecters of the kit, that possibly the classic term "lyra jocosa" might, without much violence, be appropriated to the honour of their queer little favourite!

A Caricature repudiated.—A correspondent of the *Harmonicon*, who has played on the violin amusingly enough with his *pen*, but appears, from sundry indicative points, to have been no *bowman*, has designated the instrument as "a box, half beech, half fir, on which are stretched the entrails of a cat," and from which, sounds are drawn "with a few horse-hairs," and which, moreover, "cannot be held without a distortion of the frame, and obliges us to assume an attitude so disagreeable to the head, by the chin of which, it is held."—This is a description wherewith the true Amateur will hold no sympathy: he will regard it no otherwise than with "hatefullest disrelish." He will not fail to remember, too, that it is the *sheep's* interior which is laid under contribution, and *not* the *cat's*. Then, again, doubtless, the depression of the chin *is* sometimes the reverse of agreeable; but this is an objection rarely in great force, except with those round-headed gentlemen who have short chins. A little punchy man, with a broad, baffling, double chin, cannot be great upon the fiddle—and should not aim at it. It is the business of a perfect performer to have a *long* chin—a chin whose inclination or "facilis descensus" amounts to a fixed welcome

towards the instrument, which it embraces with a continuity that in no degree compromises the head. Such a chin is the fiddler's firm friend;—its holdfast properties entitle it, as fitly as the virtuous man in Horace, to the appellation of "tenax propositi." Such a chin, for example, had Paganini.

Ambition let down.—During the last year of Spagnoletti's Saturnian rule at the Opera-House, when the reins of leadership were somewhat relaxed in the hands of that good senior, it chanced that one of his subjects, scarcely less ambitious than was Jove of old, and equally hopeful of his own succession, aspired prematurely to a position in the orchestral realm as elevated as the throne of the great directing power. In plainer language, a certain noted First Violinist, scarcely satisfied with being second to the Leader, sought to magnify his importance by the help of a stool that was considerably more *stilted* in its proportions than that occupied by his brethren of the band. Thus raised into notice, he managed, with many flourishes of his bow-arm, to divide the public attention with the Leader himself, and was enabled to look down on all besides. But pride does not triumph thus to *the end*. Spagnoletti himself, perhaps indisposed, through his then feebler condition, to contend with usurpation, took no notice of this upstart proceeding; but the members of the band, feeling it to be an indignity to their Leader, still more than to themselves, took counsel together for the purpose of putting it down. The expedient they hit upon was equally ingenious and successful. One of the carpenters of the establishment had private instructions to saw off a small bit from the lanky legs of the stool, previously to each night's sitting in the orchestra; and, by this graduated system of reduction, or what musicians would

term a "*sempre diminuendo,*" the obnoxious pretender was "let down easy," and brought to a reasonable level. Thus, though not going down, in his own estimation, he was much depressed, in the eyes of all beside. Whether he thought it worth while, when he discovered his situation, to enquire how it happened, is more than remains on record—but, if he did so, it is easy to conceive the sort of vague reply by which his mystification would be "made absolute."

A new resource in difficulty. — The following graphic sketch—a piece of what our American brethren delight to designate as the *real grit*—is from Colonel Crockett's "Adventures in Texas:"—

"As we drew nigh to the Washita, the silence was broken alone by our own talk and the clattering of our horses' hoofs; and we imagined ourselves pretty much the only travellers, when we were suddenly somewhat startled by the sound of music. We checked our horses, and listened, and the music continued. 'What can all that mean?' says I. We listened again, and we now heard, 'Hail, Columbia, happy land!' played in first-rate style. 'That's fine,' says I. 'Fine as silk, Colonel, and leetle finer,' says the other; 'but hark, the tune's changed.' We took another spell of listening, and now the musician struck up, in a brisk and lively manner, 'Over the water to Charley.' 'That's mighty mysterious,' says one; 'Can't cipher it out, no-how,' says a third. 'Then let us go a-head,' says I, and off we dashed at a pretty rapid gait, I tell you—by no means slow.

"As we approached the river, we saw, to the right of the road, a new clearing on a hill, where several men were at work, and running down the hill like wild Indians, or rather like the office-holders in pursuit of

the depositees. There appeared to be no time to be lost; so they ran, and we cut ahead for the crossing. The music continued all this time stronger and stronger, and the very notes appeared to speak distinctly, 'Over the water to Charley!'

"When we reached the crossing, we were struck all of a heap at beholding a man seated in a sulky, in the middle of the river, and playing for his life on a fiddle. The horse was up to his middle in the water: and it seemed as if the flimsy vehicle was ready to be swept away by the current. Still the fiddler fiddled on composedly, as if his life had been insured, and he was nothing more than a passenger! We thought he was mad,—and shouted to him. He heard us, and stopped his music. 'You have missed the crossing,' shouted one of the men from the clearing.—'I *know* I have,' returned the fiddler.—'If you go ten feet farther, you will be drowned.'—'I *know* I shall,' returned the fiddler.—'Turn back,' said the man.—'I *can't*,' said the other. 'Then how will you *get out?*'—'I'm sure I *don't know*.'

"The men from the clearing, who understood the river, took our horses, and rode up to the sulky, and, after some difficulty, succeeded in bringing the traveller safe to shore, when we recognised the worthy *parson* who had fiddled for us at the puppet-show at Little Rock. They told him that he had had a narrow escape; and he replied, that he had found that out an hour ago! He said he had been fiddling to the fishes for a full hour, and had exhausted all the tunes that he could play without notes. We then asked him what could have induced him to think of fiddling at a time of such peril; and he replied, that he had remarked, in his progress through life, that there was nothing in universal natur

so well calculated to draw people together, as the sound of a fiddle; and he knew that he might bawl until he was hoarse for assistance, and no one would stir a peg; but they would no sooner hear the scraping of his catgut, than they would quit all other business, and come to the spot in flocks."

A prejudice overcome.—Another story of a clergyman fond of fiddling—in this instance, a Scotchman—is to be found in *Tait's Magazine.* — "A number of his parishioners considered it as quite derogatory to his calling, that he should play upon the fiddle; so a deputation of them waited upon him, and remonstrated against this *crying* enormity. He said—"Gentlemen, did you ever see my fiddle, or hear me play?"—"No!" —"You shall do both," said he; and immediately brought a violoncello, on which he struck up a Psalm tune, asking if they had any objection to join him with their voices. They complied; and, when all was over, they expressed themselves perfectly satisfied of his orthodoxy. "A muckle, respectable, *releegious*-sounding fiddle like *that*, there was nae harm in. Na, na! it was nane o' yer scandalous penny-weddin' fiddles that they had heard o'!"

It will not have been forgotten, by some of my readers, that the musical propensities of the Rev. Charles Wesley were made a subject of stringent comment by the poet Cowper, who pointed his remarks by the line—

"With wire and catgut he concludes the day."

It is recorded, however (if I rightly remember), that the candid and kind-hearted Cowper saw reason, afterwards, to alter his impressions on that head, and to regret that he had reflected, with such freedom of pen, on the harmless recreations of the earnestly pious minister.

——From the foregoing incidental references to men of the sacred calling, we pass, by no violent transition, into the church-yard. On a stone, in the porch at the southern entrance of the collegiate church, Wolverhampton, is the following singular epitaph. "Near this place lies Claudius Phillips, whose *absolute contempt of riches*, and *inimitable performance upon the violin*, made him the admiration of all that knew him. He was born in Wales, made the tour of Europe, and, after the experience of *both* kinds of fortune, died in 1733."

Belonging to the same equivocal species of association with the grave, and by no means to be commended for its admixture of the *quaint* with the solemn, is the following "musician's epitaph," from whence gotten, I am unable to say :—

> Ah! what avails, when wrapped in shroud and pall,
> Who jigged, who fiddled, or who sang the best?
> What are to *me* the crotchets, quavers, all,
> When I have found an everlasting *rest?*

Fifty Years' Fiddling.—"An interesting jubilee was lately kept here (Mannheim). The scholars of our venerable Orchestra Director, M. Erasmus Eisenmenger, now in his 70th year, met to celebrate the fiftieth year of his life spent as an artist. It is worthy of remark that he played, in the *same* musical saloon, the *same* concerto on the violin that he had executed fifty years ago—as well as a double concerto of Viotti, which he played with his pupil, Chapel-master Frey, with a spirit and vigour quite wonderful at his age." (*Harmonicon*, 1830.)—[The curious in coincidences ought to be informed whether it was also the *same fiddle*, as formerly, that was thus eloquent in the hands of the worthy old gentleman.]

Another fifty years of it!—Teobaldo Gatti, a native of Florence, died at Paris in 1727, at a very advanced age, after having been, for rather more than half a century, a performer on the *bass-viol* in the orchestra of the Opera there. Is it possible to be more completely identified with one's instrument?

Glory made out of Shame.—A stranger, visiting Greenwich Hospital, saw a pensioner in a yellow coat, which is the punishment for disorderly behaviour. Surprised at the singularity of the man's appearance, he asked him what it meant? "Oh, sir," replied the fellow, "we who wear yellow coats are the *music*, and it is I who play the *first fiddle*." (*Hawkins's anecdotes.*)

Discrimination.—"Gentlemen," said an auctioneer, addressing the bargain-hunters by whom his sale-room was crammed—"the next lot is a very fine-toned violin."—"*A violin*, sir!" exclaimed his clerk, in surprise—"You must have made some mistake, sir,—the next lot is *the fiddle!*"

The Cremona Fiddle.—Messrs. Schramm and Karstens, the principals of a wealthy house of agency at Hamburg, were eager practitioners of the arts of accumulation. In the month of May, 1794, their extensive warehouse received the honour of a visit from an individual of unexceptionable appearance and costume, who, after bargaining for a certain number of ells of cloth, and ordering them to be cut off from the piece, found, on examination of his purse, that his instant coin was somewhat short of the sum required. He handed over, however, all the cash he had—took an acknowledgment for it—ordered the cloth to be laid aside for him, and arranged to return in a couple of hours with the balance of the money. "By the by,"

added he, "I may just as well leave with you this *Cremona*, which is rather in my way, while I'm running about the town. It is an instrument of particular value, for which I refused yesterday a matter of 300 ducats: place it there in the corner, on the top of the cloth, and it will be quite safe till my return."

It happened, about an hour afterwards, that a handsome carriage stopped at the door of Messrs. S. and K.'s warehouse. A personage, dressed with the utmost attention to effect, and decorated with various knightly insignia, alighted under an escort of three lacqueys in livery. Mons. Schramm pressed forward to receive him, and conducted him into the warehouse. His highness purchased several small articles, and, whilst expressing his satisfaction at the arrangement and variety of the goods before him, chanced to rest his eyes on the violin. Caught by its appearance, he took it up, turned it over and over, contemplated it with a kindling eye, and, calling forward one of his lacqueys, ordered him to make trial of it. The domestic proceeded to do so in a masterly manner, and drew forth sounds of such harmony as to bring together, by the ears, a listening crowd of mute gapers at so extraordinary a virtuoso. Mons. Schramm and the clerks were warmed up into an admiration far above the commercial temperature; and the whole scene appeared to partake of enchantment. Presently, motioning his domestic to stop, the great man enquired of him, in the presence of all, what he thought of the instrument, and what estimate he should incline to form of its value. "Why, certainly," said the liveryman, after a pause of examination, "if your Excellency could make it your Excellency's own for 500 ducats, I should say that your Excellency would be in possession of the finest Cremona fiddle in the world!" The man

of distinction took Mons. Schramm aside, and offered him 400: from that he ascended to 500; but the man of commerce told the man of distinction that the instrument belonged to a stranger, and explained the circumstances under which it had been left there. "Now, mark me, Mons. Schramm," said the great man; "if you can secure me this violin, you shall not repent your having obliged me: do your utmost to make the purchase for me, and go to 500 ducats, if necessary; there's my address, and I shall expect to see you at five, with the fiddle and the account."—Mons. Schramm, full of protestations of his readiness to do all in his power, respectfully bows out his visitor.

In an hour or two, the impatiently-expected owner of the instrument makes his re-appearance, takes up his parcel and violin, and is about to depart. "Stay, sir," said Mons. Schramm, a little embarrassed—"one word with you, if you please—would you feel inclined to s—, to sell that violin? I could make you a good offer for it—say 350 ducats, cash." The proposition, however, is met by a short and dry answer in the negative, and a renewed movement to depart. Mons. Schramm then offers him 360, and so on, till in short, after considerable discussion, the stranger consents to part with the object of solicitation,—but still as a matter of regret,—for the sum of 470 ducats, and to give a receipt for 500. The bargain is completed, and Mons. Schramm, receiving the fiddle with a chuckle of delight, takes leave of the stranger with lavish civility.

Full of satisfaction at the idea of having made thirty ducats, and the friendly acquaintance of a great man, Mons. Schramm, at the exact hour of five, presented himself at the hotel of St. Petersburg, situated on the Jungfernstieg. With the violin in his hand, and

the receipt for 500 ducats in his pocket, he demanded to speak to his Excellency the Baron De Strogonoff, Ambassador from Russia, to the Court of St. James's—such being the address given him in the morning by the gentleman with the equipage. He was informed by the porter that he knew nothing of the said nobleman, inasmuch as he had not come to their hotel. Mons. Schramm hereupon insists and grows warm; the servants gather round, and the dispute at length draws forth the master of the hotel, who pledges his word, in positive terms, that the Ambassador in question is not at his establishment! Enquiry is then made at all the large hotels in the town—and, at all, the Baron De Strogonoff is unknown!

It was now high time for Mons. Schramm to consider himself as having been played upon! As for the rogues, they had so well concerted their measures, that all subsequent efforts to discover them proved abortive. Mons. Schramm had full leisure for maledictions upon his own credulity and ultra-commercial spirit; nor did he very speedily get rid of the jests and gibes of his fellow-townsmen, at the piquant fact of his having paid so handsome a sum, for a fiddle that was not worth much more than a ducat!

An apt Quotation.—The felicitous power of allusion which Dean Swift had at his command, was never more pointedly shown, than in his seizure of a line from Virgil, to *fit* the circumstances of a certain domestic disaster. Relating from memory, I give but the outline of the story. A lady's gown (or *mantua*) accidentally caught fire, and damaged a gentleman's fiddle, which was lying unfortunately near it. The Dean, either witnessing the accident, or informed of it, exclaimed pathetically,

"*Mantua*, væ! miseræ nimiùm vicina *Cremonæ!*"

The "Leading Instrument" victorious. — Anseaume, a French gentleman, of very limited income, hired a small house at Bagnolet, and invited his friends once or twice a-week to come and amuse themselves there. On these occasions, each brought some provisions: one, wine; another, cold meat; another, patties; another, game. It unluckily happened that Anseaume, as absent in mind as straitened in his finances, had forgotten, for a whole year, to pay his rent. The landlord made a descent upon him, precisely on the day when his friends Collé, Panard, Piron, Gillet, the painter Watteau, the musician Degueville, and other epicures, had assembled there. These gentlemen, according to custom, had brought plenty of provender, but no money; and the landlord imperiously demanded his rent of two hundred crowns. What was to be done, in order to assist their friend? They immediately set about cooking the meat and poultry; they levied contributions on the fruit and vegetables of the gardens; Watteau drew a beautiful and inviting sign, and Degueville borrowed a *violin* of the parish beadle; in short, they got up a *cabaret* and *fête Champêtre.* The appearance of these new cooks, who served their customers in habits of embroidered velvet, with swords by their sides, had a curious effect, and greatly diverted the company, which was so numerous, that the receipts amounted to five hundred crowns! Anseaume paid his landlord, and his distress was converted into joy and gladness. But now a question arose, that was discussed with no small earnestness and interest:—To which of his guests was the host most indebted? Those who played the part of cooks, declared that, without their labours, there would have been nothing for the public to eat; Watteau laid no little stress on the in-

vitation held out by his sign; and Degueville insisted that, without his music, the people's attention would not have been drawn to the sign; and that, even if they had noticed it, and come in, there would have been no mirth and spirit, little eaten, and that little scantily and reluctantly paid for. The dispute began to grow warm, when Degueville seized the violin, played them all into good humour, and was, at length, allowed to be the victor!

Sending for Time-Keepers.—In treating of the importance of adjusting the time of a composition to the sentiment and intention of the author, it is stated by Kandler, an able German writer, that Haydn was so offended at the rude and hurried manner in which he found his music driven by us English, when he first visited our country, as to send for the family of the Moralts from Vienna, to shew the Londoners the time and expression with which he intended his quartetts to be played.—Kiesewetter also, in leading Beethoven's symphonies at the Philharmonic Concert (although himself a performer who particularly shone in rapid playing), is said to have insisted upon their being executed more slowly than that orchestra had been accustomed to perform them.

Musical Exaction.—A rich, but penurious personage, who somehow aspired to be thought a man of *taste*, was resolved, on one occasion, to make exhibition of this quality, by giving to his friends an entertainment of instrumental music. While the musicians were all at work, he seemed satisfied with the performance—but when the principal Violin came to be engaged upon an incidental solo, he enquired, in a towering passion, why the others were remaining *idle?* "It is a *pizzicato* for one instrument," replied the operator. "I can't help

that," exclaimed the virtuoso, who was determined to have the worth of his money—"Let the trumpets *pizzicato* along with you!"—This hopeful amateur may serve to recall the not unfamiliar anecdote about old Jacob Astley, of "horse-theatre" celebrity, who observed a violinist in his band to be in a state of temporary cessation from playing, during the continued activity of the others, and asked him what he *meant* by it. "Why, sir, here's a *rest* marked in my part—a rest of several bars."—"*Rest!*" shouted Astley (who had always a great horror of being imposed upon), "don't tell me about *rest*, sir. I pay you to come here and *play*, sir, and not to *rest!*"

A Device for a Dinner.—Doctor Arne once went to Cannons, the seat of the late Duke of Chandos, to assist at the performance of an oratorio in the Chapel of Whitchurch; but such was the throng of company, that no provisions were to be procured at the Duke's house. On going to the Chandos Arms, in the town of Edgeware, the Doctor made his way into the kitchen, where he found only a leg of mutton on the spit. This, the waiter informed him, was bespoken by a party of gentlemen. The Doctor (rubbing his elbow—his usual habit) exclaimed, "I'll have that mutton—give me a *fiddle-string*." He took the fiddle-string, cut it in pieces, and, privately sprinkling it over the mutton, walked out of the kitchen. Then, waiting very patiently till the waiter had served it up, he heard one of the gentlemen exclaim—"Waiter! this meat is full of *maggots:* take it away!" This was what the Doctor expected.—"Here, give it *me*."—"O, sir," says the waiter, "you can't eat it—'tis full of maggots."—"Nay, never mind," cries the Doctor, "fiddlers have strong stomachs."

So, bearing it away, and scraping off the cat-gut, he got a hearty dinner.

A "Practising" Coachman.—Too true it is that Nature has not gifted all mortals with a taste for music. Shakspeare tells us that the man who hath not music in his soul is fit for "broils;" and the Duchess of Ragusa appears to have inclined to his opinion, if we may judge from an occurrence in which she was concerned some years since. Finding herself offended that the coachman of a certain Miss Ozenne, her neighbour, should practise the violin too much in the vicinity of her ducal ears, she summoned the lady, the coachman, and the violin, before the *Tribunal de Police*, for making a "tapage injurieux et nocturne." In vain the lady pleaded the right of her domestics to make musicians of themselves, if they could: the Duchess declared it was done solely and purely for her annoyance; the *Commissaire du Quartier* declared that the noise consisted of "sons aigus, bruyans, et dissonans;" and Miss Ozenne was condemned to be imprisoned one day, and to be fined to the amount of ten shillings.—(*New Monthly Magazine.*)

A Footman, to match.—"The following curiously illustrative anecdote may be relied on. A few days since, a footman went into Mori's music-shop to buy a fiddle-string. While he was making his choice, a gentleman entered the shop, and began to examine various compositions for the violin. Among the rest, he found Paganini's celebrated "Merveille—*Duo* pour un *seul* Violon," and, perceiving the difficulties in which it abounded, asked the shopman if he thought that Mori himself could play it. The young man, a little perplexed, and unwilling to imply that his master's powers had any limit, replied that he had no doubt he could

perform it, *provided* he practised it for *a week*; upon which the footman, who stood intent on the conversation, broke in on the discourse, and swore that Mori could do no such thing, for that he himself had been practising the piece for *three weeks*, and could not play it yet!"—(*Harmonicon*, *May*, 1830.)

A Royal "Whereabout."—Salomon, who gave some lessons on the violin to George the Third, said one day to his august pupil, "Fiddlers may be divided into three classes: to the *first* belong those who cannot play *at all;* to the *second*, those who play *badly;* and to the third, those who play *well.* You, Sire, have already reached the *second.*"

Precocious Performers.—The violin, in the hands of *children*, has been often rendered the theme of astonishment. In the foregoing pages, many instances have been given of eminent players, whose powerful maturity was prefigured, in the display of genius made in their tender youth. Many blossoms there are, however, which *never* pay their promise afterwards in fruit; and many an "acute juvenal, voluble and full of grace," has made early flourishes on the fiddle, that have led to nothing of value in his fuller years. Apropos of this too commonly observable disproportion, a French writer has the following epigram:—

SUR LES PRODIGES À LA MODE.

Plus merveilleux que nos ancêtres,
Ou peut-être plus singuliers,
A dix ans nous avons des maîtres,
Qui sont à vingt des écoliers!

Which may be thus freely paraphrased:—

Our's is an age of wonders;—we behold
Precocious prodigies, in passing plenty:
We have our *masters*, now, at ten years old,—
But then—they sink to *scholars*, when they're twenty!

The Germans have an expressive denomination for these very early and forced exhibitants. They style them *wunder-kinde*, or wonder-children.

After hearing some violin variations rattled through at a Vienna Concert by a six-year old performer, son of a M. Birnbach, a prognosticator was heard to say, with a gravity that scarcely seemed unreasonable: "Well! I foresee that, before many years are passed, we shall have a symphony of Haydn's performed by babes in swaddling-clothes!"

As a matter of curiosity, I will here subjoin a few records of early feats, without attempting to distinguish those which may belong simply to the class of *wunder-kinde*.

Weichsel, the brother of Mrs. Billington, played in public with his sister, when she was *six* years old, and himself a year older—their instruments being the violin and the pianoforte.—Balfe, the singer and composer, made a kind of *début* as a juvenile violin-player (according to the *Harmonicon*) at a theatrical benefit.—Two Hungarian boys, of the name of Ebner, one ten and the other eleven, played some of Mayseder's difficult variations at a Concert at Berlin, in 1823.—A boy of twelve years of age, named Khayll, pupil of Jansa, introduced by Moscheles at a Concert at Vienna in 1827, played some admirable variations on the violin, in which he displayed an ease and solidity far beyond his years, and a great knowledge of his instrument.—At Limberg, in 1831, Apollinarino Conski, *five* years old, surprised all hearers by his execution of a concerto of Maurer's; and the son of this last-named Artist, at the age of twelve, performed in the same year some of Mayseder's variations, at his father's Concerts at Berlin.

At Stutgardt, in 1831, the brothers Eickhorn, the

elder *nine*, and the younger *seven* years of age, gave a Concert at one of the saloons, and astonished not only the public in general, but the connoisseurs, by their early proficiency on that most difficult of instruments here under notice. The elder played variations by Mayseder and Rode, and a pot-pourri with his younger brother, composed by Jacobi—and some variations of Kummer's.

In various towns of Switzerland, during the same year, the four brothers Koella, of Zurich, gave Concerts with great success. These boys were then respectively twelve, ten, nine, and seven years of age—"small by degrees, and beautifully less." The elder played the violin and violoncello with great spirit and power; the third was a good tenor-player; and the youngest executed concertos of Viotti's! Their quartett-playing, however, was their strongest point.

Dr. Crotch, when about *five* years old, was capable of fiddling, and after a fashion, too, by no means common to others—that is to say, *left-handed.*

Fiddlers' Tricks.—In 1731, a Concert was announced at Hickford's room, for the benefit of Signor Castrucci, *first violin of the Opera*, who, as the advertisement stated, was to play, amongst other pieces, a solo, in which he would execute "*twenty-four*" notes with one bow." On the following day, this advertisement was burlesqued by another, in which was promised a solo by the *last violin of Goodman's Fields' Playhouse*, who would perform *twenty-five* notes with one bow. Such a feat as either of these, would, in our own days, be nothing at all.

A Signor Angelo Casirola, of Tortona, mystified the good people of Milan, in 1825, by playing the *reverse* way—that is, playing with *a fiddle* upon *a bow!* His

plan was to fasten the bow in an upright position upon a table, and play upon it with the violin, according to the best manner in which he could manage to "rub on." The effect was unpleasing, both to ear and eye. Another of his tricks was a *sonata scherzosa*, for which he had two violins *fixed*, with the heads screwed on a table, and then worked away right and left, with a bow in each hand, accompanied by a full orchestra. He fooled his audience to the top of their bent, and was applauded to the very echo! It might assist the gratification of the gapers after novelty, if the thaumaturgist, operating with his left hand, as usual, on the finger-board of his instrument, were to have the *bow* held and worked by *another person*. The Chinese flutists have done something like this in *principle*—one blowing the flute which another has played on! More wonderful still—at some entertainments given by their Emperor, two musicians played together the same air, each having one hand on his own flute, and the other on that of his companion!

At Munich, in 1827, M. Féréol Mazas raised a public astonishment somewhat akin to that created in London more recently by Paganini, as an operator on *one string*: and, indeed, all the more *obvious* peculiarities in the performance of the great Italian artist—those pertaining to mechanical dexterity—have been copied, more or less successfully. Assuming to be "the English Paganini," a certain individual, of no distinction at that time as a legitimate player, was particularly prominent in this business of imitation. He presented, sooth to say, but a soul-less exhibition, having some of the externals of similitude, indeed, but none of that which "passeth *show*." Upon the auditors scraped together, however, his "ad captandum" tricks appeared

to tell abundantly—more especially when he worked with his left hand the pizzicato accompaniment to the bowed passages; when he brought out some harmonics from *below*, instead of *above*, the finger-stops; when (by way of going *beyond* Paganini) he thrust the instrument between the hair and stick of the relaxed bow, and thus played on the strings with the *inner* hair: and, above all, when he placed the bow between his knees, and, taking the fiddle in both hands, rubbed the strings against it, so as to execute some difficulties of which a judicious observer might have well regretted the possibility! One of the least pardonable of the faults attending this display, was that his instrument did not always *tell the truth:* in other words, its intonation was sometimes false.

ECCENTRIC VARIETIES OF THE VIOLIN KIND.

The Fiddle of Iceland.—"Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander, when they visited this island in 1773, brought thence a very ancient musical instrument, of a long and narrow form, which used to be played on with a bow; and of which they did me the honour to make me a present. It is called by the natives the *Long-Spiel*, and has four strings of copper, one of which is used as a drone. Pieces of wood are placed at different distances upon the finger-board, to serve as frets. Though this individual instrument has the appearance of great antiquity, yet, rude and clumsy as it is, there can be no doubt but that it was still more imperfect in its first invention: for, to have placed these frets, implies some small degree of meditation, experience, and a scale; and as to the bow, that wonderful engine! which the ancients, with all their diligence and musical refinements, had never been able to discover, it seems,

from this instrument, to have been known in Iceland at least as early as in any other part of Europe. Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander, when they found the *Long-Spiel* on the island, had very great difficulty in discovering a person among the inhabitants who either could, or would dare to play on it. At length a wicked Icelander was found, who, being rendered more courageous and liberal than the rest, by a few glasses of generous gin, ventured, in secret, to exhilarate these philosophers.....with a psalm-tune."—*Burney's Hist. of Music*, v. iii, p. 40, 41.

Fiddle of Tartary.—The Tartars have an instrument peculiar to themselves, which they denominate a *koba.* It is a *kind* of violin, half open at the top, in shape somewhat resembling a boat, having two hair-strings, which are swept with a bow, the notes being stopped by the fingers of the left hand, as in performing on the recognized violin.

African Fiddle.—The Mosees, Mallowas, Burnous, and natives from the more remote parts of the interior, play on a *rude violin.* The body is a calabash; the top is covered with deer-skin, and two large holes are cut in it for the sound to escape: the strings, or rather the string, is composed of cow's hair, and broad, like that of the bow with which they play, which resembles the bow of a violin. Their grimace equals that of an Italian *buffo:* they generally accompany themselves with the voice, and increase the humour by a strong nasal sound.—*Bowdich's Mission to Ashantee.*

" At parting, he (Bee Simera, a king in the Kooranko Country) sent his *griot,* or minstrel, to play before me, and sing a song of welcome. This man had a sort of fiddle, the body of which was formed of a calabash, in which two small square holes were cut, to give it a

tone. It had only one string, composed of many twisted horse-hairs, and, although he could only bring from it four notes, yet he contrived to vary them so as to produce a pleasing harmony (!) He played at my door till I fell asleep, and, waking at day-break, his notes still saluted my ears; when, finding that his attendance would not be discontinued without a *douceur*, I gave him a head of tobacco, and told him to go home and thank his master."—*Major Laing's Travels in Western Africa.*

"The admirers of Paganini (says Dr. Hogg, in his "*Visit to Alexandria*") may learn with surprise that a species of Violin, with a single string, is not only well-known in Egypt, but is frequently played in the streets, with extraordinary skill. Of the celebrated Italian, the Egyptians never heard; but they often listen with delight to the melodious sounds drawn forth from a single string by a wild untutored Arab."

Greek Fiddle.—M. Fauriel, in his "Chants Populaires de la Grèce Moderne," says that the Greeks accompany their songs by an instrument with strings, which is played with a bow, and that this is exactly the ancient lyre of the Greeks, of which it retains the name as well as the form. This lyre, he adds, when perfect, consists of five strings, but it has frequently but two or three.

The *bow* is of course a modern accessory, and must have changed, materially, the mode of playing the instrument, as well as its effect.

An Eight-Stringed Violin.—Prinz, in his History, assures us that, about the year 1649, Lord Somerset invented a new kind of violin, which had eight strings, instead of four; and that, in the hands of a master who knew how to avail himself of its advantages, it was

productive of very extraordinary effects. To the truth of this, Kircher bears witness. A violin, with eight strings, was also played on by a M. Urhan, at a concert at the French *Conservatoire Royal*, in 1830.

An intermediate Instrument.—With the plausible view of filling up a void in the range of stringed instruments—that which occurs through the interval of an *octave* between the pitch of the viola and the violoncello—a new instrument of the violin class was invented, a few years ago, by a French Amateur, who proposed to designate it the *Contralto*. Its four strings were tuned an octave below those of the violin, and, consequently, a fourth below the common viola, or tenor, and a fifth above the violoncello. In quartetts (according to the inventor) the *second violin* might in future be replaced by the *viola*, and the viola by the *Contralto;* which latter would possess the further advantage of enabling its player to execute with ease those high passages that are so difficult on the violoncello.—That an instrument thus designed *might* sometimes participate effectively in orchestral business, is extremely probable; but that it should displace in quartetts the *second violin*, the importance of which, as an aid, arises so much from its brilliancy, is not *at all* to be supposed. The truth appears to be, that what is here referred to as an invention, possesses little claim to that character; for it was preceded by *the baryton*, a stringed instrument of a character between the tenor and violoncello, which has now entirely fallen into disuse. Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, an ardent musical Amateur, was very fond of this instrument: and Haydn, who composed a great number of pieces for it, in order to supply the Prince's incessant demand for novelty, frequently said that the necessity he was under of composing so

much for the baryton, contributed greatly to his improvement.

Something more than a Violin!—M. Vincenti, a lute-master at Florence, invented, some years ago, a violin with *eighteen strings* and *two bows*, and called it the *Violon-Général*, because it combined (or professed to combine), with the tones of the violin, those of the contra-basso, the violoncello, and the viola!

An Air Violin.—A new and ingeniously invented instrument was presented, some years since, to the "Académie des Sciences" of Paris, by M. Isoard. It resembled the common violin, with the strings extended between two wooden (or metal) blades. It was vibrated upon at one end by a *current of air*, while, at the other, the player shortened the strings by the pressure of the finger. In fact, the strings of this instrument were acted upon by the current of air, *instead* of the common *bow*. The sounds were said to vary between those of the French horn and bassoon. Were it possible for this invention to come into ordinary use, the violin would have to be classed as a *wind*-instrument!

Automaton Violinist.—"After the extraordinary performance of Paganini and Ole Bull, our readers will not be surprised at any new development of the powers of this instrument, however great; but there are few in the world who will hear, without wonder and admiration, of the unequalled performance of Monsieur Marreppe's *automaton violin-player*, which was recently exhibited before the Royal Conservatory at Paris. Our informant, M. Bruyère, who was present, thus describes this wonderful piece of mechanism: "On entering the saloon, I saw a well-dressed handsome figure of a man, apparently between forty and fifty, standing with a violin in his hand, as if contemplating a piece of music which

lay on a desk before him; and, had I not gone to see an automaton, I should have believed the object before me to have been endowed with life and reason, so perfectly natural and easy were the attitudes and expression of countenance of the figure! I had but little time for observation, before the orchestra was filled by musicians, and, on the leader taking his seat, the figure instantly raised itself erect, bowed with much elegance two or three times, and then, turning to the leader, nodded, as if to say he was ready, and placed his violin to his shoulder. At the given signal, he raised his bow, and, applying it to the instrument, produced, *à la Paganini*, one of the most thrilling and extraordinary flourishes I ever heard, in which scarcely a semitone within the compass of the instrument was omitted; and this, executed with a degree of rapidity and clearness perfectly astonishing. The orchestra then played a short symphony, in which the automaton occasionally joined in beautiful style: he then played a most beautiful fantasia in E natural, with accompaniments, including a movement *allegro molto* on the fourth string solo, which was perfectly indescribable. The tones produced were like any thing but a violin; and expressive beyond conception. I felt as if lifted from my seat, and burst into tears, in which predicament I saw most persons in the room. Suddenly, he struck into a cadenza, in which the harmonics, double and single, arpeggios on the four strings, and saltos, for which Paganini was so justly celebrated, were introduced with the greatest effect; and, after a close shake of eight bars' duration, commenced the coda, a prestissimo movement, played in three parts throughout. This part of the performance was perfectly magical. I have heard the great Italian—I have heard the Norwegian —I have heard the best of music—but I never heard

such sounds as then saluted my ear. It commenced *p p p*, rising by a gradual *crescendo* to a pitch beyond belief, and then, by a gradual *morendo* and *calando*, died away, leaving the audience absolutely enchanted. Monsieur Marreppe, who is a player of no mean order, then came forward amidst the most deafening acclamations, and stated that, emulated by the example of Vaucanson's flute-player, he had conceived the project of constructing this figure, which had cost him many years of study and labour before he could bring it to completion. He then showed to the company the interior of the figure, which was completely filled with *small cranks*, by which the motions are given to the several parts of the automaton, at the will of the conductor, who has the whole machine so perfectly under controul, that Monsieur Marreppe proposes that the automaton shall perform any piece of music which may be laid before him, within a fortnight. He also showed that to a certain extent the figure was self-acting, as, on winding up a string, several of the most beautiful airs were played, among which were "Nel cor più," "Partant pour la Syrie," "Weber's last Waltz," and "La ci darem la mano," all with brilliant embellishments. But the *chef-d'œuvre* is the manner in which the figure is made to obey the direction of the conductor, whereby it is endowed with a sort of semi-reason."—*Galignani's Messenger.*

The Street Fiddler.—Behold the poor fellow, as he stands there in the sun, against that dead wall, with a face that betrays many a foregone year of patient endurance, and a figure that is the very index to "narrow circumstances." His old brown great coat, loose and hard-worn—his battered hat—his shoes unconscious

of blacking—are the vouchers of his low estate. He wears "the hapless vesture of humility." He is half-blind, and will be *wholly* so before long, for blindness is the badge of his sad tribe;—but *then*—he will have a *companion*, in the *dog* that will lead him about!

See, how sobered is his style of execution—how passive his action! The fire of enthusiasm is not for *him*: he can but shew the plodding of a quiet spirit. He holdeth his bow, not as your topping players do, but with a third part of its length below his hand. He finds this plan the easiest, because it is his wont to work more from the *shoulder* than the *wrist!* Think no scorn of him, ye great artists—ye triumphant euphonists! He is self-taught,—or, which is the same thing, hath learned of his father, who was *alter ipse*, and who himself got his knowledge "in the family." Yet, though his bow-arm hath none of the sweep that belongs to science, behold how he puts mettle into the heels of infancy, and even peradventure brings a wriggle into the sides of old age: such power is there in the notes of a fiddle, even in the hands of decrepitude itself! The nursery-maids, who cannot condescend to *talk* with a street-fiddler, as they would with a young policeman, accord a smile, nevertheless, to some of his "passages," and a halfpenny to his pauperism. Musician as he is, or would be *called* (for poverty has its pride), do not test him with terms, or ask him the meaning of a "common chord:" he will think you design to insult his misery with a dependent allusion! Him *harmony* concerneth not, nor counterpoint either;—he is a simple *melodist*, and, to him, a few old tunes are the entire world of music. After all, too, the finest melody in *his* ear, is the sound of human sympathy; and the best of music is the rattle of frequent halfpence in his hat—a hat by

night, a money-box by day! His daily gains, what are they? A sorry pittance, truly; yet the poor old fellow, albeit no classic, manages to live on the Horatian plan, "contentus parvo," and is very far from being the most thankless of mortals, although

"For all his *shifts*, he cannot shift *his clothes*."

It is not always people of the finest ear, who are the most intolerant of ambulating fiddlers. There are some *dull* persons who have little other notion of music in *any* shape, than as so much *noise*. The complaint of these against the poor starveling here described, is that he makes so *loud* a noise. Let us only (with sly allusion to the early name for the barbarous instrument) ask them one question—although even a bad joke may be quite thrown away upon the dull:

Say, wherefore should it *not* be loud,
The noise proceeding from a *crowd?*

And, while employing this kind of excuse, which will perhaps be received as better than none, in behalf of a fraternity, who, if they *torment* a little, unquestionably do much more *suffer*, I may as well go on to offer the following such-as-it-is

APOLOGY FOR MATTHEW MARKIT,
A "COMMON FIDDLER."

Let not wrath against him gather—
Call him not a useless bore!
Would you not, this dirty weather,
Have *a scraper at your door?*
Such is he;—nay, more than that,
He's a *Scraper, and a—Mat!*

I do remember an itinerant, who used to sing a piece of dismal merriment, with a squeaking violin accompa-

niment, to the appropriate burden of "Heigh ho! fiddle de dee!" and a very wry face at each recurrence of this peculiar interjection. He much affected Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner, but was likewise visible at other points of the metropolis. His wife, a diminutive body, with a small whine by way of voice, helped to make "variety of wretchedness" in the exhibition. They looked as if familiar with none but the copper coinage of the realm. Yet they had generally their *cóterie* around them—their "assistance admirative." To be musical, *any how*, passes for a talent!

I will not suppose my readers so oblivious of an elderly joke, as not to recognize the face of that which is about to greet them; but, having found a version of it "turned to numbers," I present it—a little "rubbed up" for the occasion—to the indulgent attention of those who have only met with it in prosaic statement:

A blind man, fed by fiddling,
Was known through many a street;
His "style," far short of "middling,"
With some did pass for sweet.
He priz'd his fiddle greatly;
The *case* had fainter praise—
The *case* by "wife" made lately,
With half a yard of baize.
One day, when, led by Rover,
He had a bridge to pass,
His fiddle tumbled over,
Stick, case, and all, alas!
He straight set up a roaring,
And added such grimace,
That folks around came pouring,
And pitied his sad case.
"Sad *case!* Psha! twiddle diddle!"
Cried he, with scornful face;
"Could I but get my *fiddle*
D'ye think I'd mind *the case?*"

Having thus made ourselves familiar with the street fiddler, and thereby, as it were, "sounded the very base-string of humility," may we not be fairly supposed to have reached the *fag-end* of our subject? Whilst on this lower level, however—or, in what may be termed the Vale of Cacophony—I cannot conclude, without offering to the patience of my kind readers two more scraps of verse, wherein I have sought to exhibit a pair of specimens that belong, equally with the poor street fiddler, to the class of—those that *might* be dispensed with:

EPIGRAM

ON AN UNFORTUNATE MAN, AND BAD FIDDLER.

Though DIBBLE is feeble in all that he's *at*,
Few fools ever *fondled a failure* before, so.
In love, as in music, he stands for a *flat*—
(For his Fanny is false, and his fiddle is *more* so),
While *he* still ignoreth—what none can dispute—
That his suit's out of tune, and his tune doesn't suit!

ANOTHER, ON ANOTHER BAD FIDDLER.

When SCREECHLEY on that *noise-box* harshly grates,
What, what's the supposition that must follow?
This—that by some odd shifting of the Fates,
'Tis *Marsyas'* turn to flay alive *Apollo!*

ADDENDUM.

FEMALE VIOLINISTS.

"Place aux dames!"

[This section of the Work, which should have formed Chapter VIII, having been accidentally omitted in the printing, there remained no other course than, either to insert it here (as is actually done), or, by a dismissal utterly at variance with the laws of gallantry and of justice, to exclude it altogether, and so to debar the fairer portion of the community from all participation in the honours connected with the "King of Instruments"—an idea not to be for a moment entertained. If, in this volume, as in a campaigning army, the ladies find themselves placed altogether in *the rear*—let them attribute the position, in *this* case as in *that*, to any-thing but disrespect.]

Instead of a *bow-arm*, must ladies be allowed only the *arm* of a *beau?* Why should not a lady play on the Violin? The common objection is, that it is ungraceful. The ladies in Boccaccio's Decameron, however—and who shall charge *them* with want of grace?—played on the *viol*, a bowed instrument requiring from the performer a similar position and handling to those exacted by the violin. If this latter instrument, considered in relation to a lady, *should* be admitted to be somewhat deficient in grace,—has not the lady, out of the overflowing abundance of this quality, which is her sex's characteristic, some of it to spare for communication to

the instrument? Can she not impart some of it to whatsoever object she chooses to associate with herself? Surely, she who can transform the rudest of beings from a bear to a man, and from a man to a gentleman, can lend a few spare charms to so grateful a receiver as the fiddle, which is found to repay in so eloquent a manner the attentions bestowed on it. But if the doubters continue to shake their heads at this, I would ask them whether, after all, we are to expect grace in *every* act and habit of a lady's life, and call on her to reject every thing that may be thought inconsistent with it? Our modern respected fair one may, like Eve, have "heaven in her eye;" but really, looking at some of the offices which we are content to thrust upon her, it seems rather too much to insist that she shall also, like our original mother, have "grace in *all* her movements." Is there grace in making a pie, or cutting bread and butter, or darning a stocking? If we have grace in the *effect*, shall we be rigid to require it in the *means* also? Now, the grace which belongs to violin-playing is *audible* rather than *visible*, residing in the effect more than in the means: nor ought we to be such cormorants of pleasure, as to demand that the person who is filling our *ears* with rapture, shall, at the same time, be enchanting to the utmost our *eyes*. If, then, a lady, full of soul and intelligence, is capable of expressing these through the fine medium which this instrument offers, should she be debarred from it, and restricted perhaps to the harp, because, forsooth, the grace that is merely external is found most in association with the latter? Let us only be reasonable enough to be satisfied, on principle, with the delicious effect that visits us through the ears, and we shall then give no hyper-critical heed to the rapid action of a lady's arm in a *presto* movement, or to the

depression of her head in holding the instrument; nor shall we continue to demand, with a pertinacity more nice than wise, that a feminine fiddler be

"Graceful as Dian when she draws *her* bow."

That exquisite sensibility which is one distinguishing charm of the female character, has its fittest musical exponent in the powers of the violin, which, therefore, in this particular sense, might even be styled the women's own instrument: but, without going so far as this, there seems no sufficient reason why it should not, occasionally, be honored by figuring in the hands of the fair. Should these defensive remarks, however, be found unsatisfactory by your anti-women's-playing-the-violin-at-all sort of people, I have nothing farther to say to them, but leave them to quote, undisturbed, their "quæ sunt virorum, mascula dicas," &c. For my own part, I think so highly both of the ladies and the violin, that I rejoice at every opportunity of their being introduced to each other, and am delighted to know that, from time to time, certain clever and spirited women *have* been found ready to overcome the prejudices that have so long kept them asunder. Let us by all means enquire who these are.

A very high name meets us at the outset of our investigation—no less a one than that of Queen Elizabeth. This exalted personage, who is recorded to have been musical "so far forth as might become a princess," appears to have amused herself not only with the lute, the virginals, and her own voice, but with the violin. An instrument of this denomination, of the old and imperfect fashion, but splendidly "got up," has been traced to her possession. If any particulars of Her Majesty's style of performance could now be obtained,

it would doubtless be found that she displayed, in no common degree, what is called "a powerful bow-arm," but that she neglected the "sweet little touches" that give delicacy to execution.

To arrive at instances nearer to our own time, let us go at once from the Queen of England to Madame MARA, the Queen of Song. Her first musical studies were directed to the violin. When yet an infant, the little Gertrude Elizabeth Smaling (such was her name) discovered so strong an inclination for the violin, that her father was induced to give her a few lessons on that instrument. Her progress was so rapid, that, as early as her tenth year, she excited the public surprise. It is certain that the development of her vocal powers was not a little aided by this cultivation of an instrument that may be called the friendly rival of the human voice. She herself was known to declare, that, if she had a daughter, she should learn the fiddle before she sang a note; for (as she remarked) how can you convey a just notion of minute variations in the pitch of a note? By a fixed instrument? No! By the voice? No! but, by sliding the fingers upon a string, you instantly make the slightest variations visibly, as well as audibly, perceptible. It was by her early practice of the violin, that this celebrated woman had acquired her wonderful facility of dashing at all musical intervals, however unusual and difficult. She married a violoncellist, of no great capacity, except for drinking.

MADDALENA LOMBARDINI SIRMEN, who united to high accomplishment as a singer such an eminence in violin-playing, as enabled her, in some degree, to rival Nardini, had an almost European reputation towards the end of the last century. She received her first musical instructions at the Conservatory of the *Mendicanti* at

Venice, and then took lessons on the violin from Tartini. About the year 1780, she visited France and England. This feminine artist composed a considerable quantity of violin music, a great part of which was published at Amsterdam. A curious document is extant as a relic of the correspondence between this lady and Tartini. It consists of a preceptive letter from the great master, the original of which, along with a translation by Dr. Burney, was published in London in 1771. From this pamphlet, which is now among the rarities of musical literature, I shall here give the Doctor's English version of the letter:

"My very much esteemed

"Signora Maddalena,

"Finding myself at length disengaged from the weighty business which has so long prevented me from performing my promise to you, I shall begin the instructions you wish from me, by letter; and if I should not explain myself with sufficient clearness, I entreat you to tell me your doubts and difficulties, in writing, which I shall not fail to remove in a future letter.

"Your principal practice and study should, at present, be confined to the use and power of the *bow*, in order to make yourself entirely mistress in the execution and expression of whatever can be played or sung, within the compass and ability of your instrument. Your first study, therefore, should be the true manner of holding, balancing, and pressing the bow lightly, but steadily, upon the strings, in such manner as that it shall seem to *breathe* the first tone it gives, which must proceed from the friction of the string, and not from percussion, as by a blow given with a hammer

upon it. This depends on laying the bow lightly upon the strings, at the first contact, and on gently pressing it afterwards; which, if done gradually, can scarce have too much force given to it—because, if the tone is *begun* with delicacy, there is little danger of rendering it afterwards either coarse or harsh.

"Of this first contact, and delicate manner of beginning a tone, you should make yourself a perfect mistress, in every situation and part of the bow, as well in the middle as at the extremities; and in moving it up, as well as in drawing it down. To unite all these laborious particulars into one lesson, my advice is, that you first exercise yourself in a swell upon an open string—for example, upon the second, or *la:* that you begin *pianissimo,* and increase the tone by slow degrees to its *fortissimo;* and this study should be equally made, with the motion of the bow up, and down; in which exercise you should spend at least *an hour* every day, though at different times, a little in the morning, and a little in the evening; having constantly in mind that this practice is, of all others, the most difficult, and the most essential to playing well on the Violin. When you are a perfect mistress of this part of a good performer, a swell will be very easy to you—beginning with the most minute softness, increasing the tone to its loudest degree, and diminishing it to the same point of softness with which you began; and all this in the same stroke of the bow. Every degree of pressure upon the string, which the expression of a note or passage shall require, will, by this means, be easy and certain; and you will be able to execute with your bow whatever you please. After this, in order to acquire that light pulsation and play of the wrist from whence velocity in bowing arises, it will be best for you to practise, every

day, one of the *allegros*, of which there are three, in Corelli's solos, which entirely move in semiquavers. The first is in D, in playing which you should accelerate the motion a little each time, till you arrive at the greatest degree of swiftness possible. But two precautions are necessary in this exercise. The first is, that you play the notes *staccato*, that is, separate and detached, with a little space between every two, as if there was a rest after each note. The second precaution is, that you first play with the point of the bow; and, when that becomes easy to you, that you use that part of it which is between the point and the middle; and, when you are likewise mistress of this part of the bow, that you practise in the same manner with the middle of the bow. And, above all, you must remember, in these studies, to begin the *allegros* or flights sometimes with an up-bow, and sometimes with a *down-bow*, carefully avoiding the habit of constantly practising one way.

"In order to acquire a greater facility of executing swift passages in a light and neat manner, it will be of great use if you accustom yourself to skip over a string between two quick notes in divisions. Of such divisions you may play extempore as many as you please, and in every key, which will be both useful and necessary.

"With regard to the finger-board, or carriage of the left hand, I have one thing strongly to recommend to you, which will suffice for all, and that is the taking a violin part—either the *first* or *second* of a concerto, sonata, or song (any thing will serve the purpose)—and playing it upon the *half-shift*; that is, with the first finger upon G on the first string, and constantly keeping upon this shift, playing the whole piece without moving the hand from this situation, unless A on the fourth

string be wanted, or D upon the first; but, in that case, you should afterwards return again to the half-shift, without ever moving the hand down to the natural position. This practice should be continued till you can execute with facility upon the half-shift any violin part, not intended as a solo, at sight. After this, advance the hand on the finger-board to the whole-shift, with the first finger upon A on the first string, and accustom yourself to this position, till you can execute every thing upon the whole shift with as much ease as when the hand is in its natural situation; and when certain of this, advance to the *double-shift*, with the first finger upon B on the first string. When sure of that likewise, pass to the fourth position of the hand, making C with the first finger, upon the first string: and, indeed, this is a scale in which, when you are firm, you may be said to be mistress of the finger-board. This study is so necessary, that I most earnestly recommend it to your attention.

"I now pass to the third essential part of a good performer on the Violin, which is the making a good *shake;* and I would have you practise it slowly, moderately fast, and quickly; that is, with the two notes succeeding each other in these three degrees of *adagio, andante,* and *presto;* and, in practice, you have great occasion for these different kinds of shakes; for the same shake will not serve with equal propriety for a slow movement as for a quick one. To acquire both at once with the same trouble, begin with an open string—either the first or second, it will be equally useful: sustain the note in a swell, and begin the shake very slowly, increasing in quickness by insensible degrees, till it becomes rapid. You must not rigorously move immediately from semiquavers to demisemiquavers, or

from these to the next in degree; that would be doubling the velocity of the shake all at once, which would be a *skip*, not a *gradation;* but you can imagine, between a semiquaver and a demisemiquaver, intermediate degrees of rapidity, quicker than the one, and slower than the other of these characters. You are, therefore, to increase in velocity, by the same degrees, in practising the shake, as in loudness, when you make a swell.

"You must attentively and assiduously persevere in the practice of this embellishment, and begin at first with an open string, upon which, if you are once able to make a good shake with the first finger, you will, with the greater facility, acquire one with the second, the third, and the fourth or little finger, with which you must practise in a particular manner, as more feeble than the rest of its brethren.

"I shall at present propose no other studies to your application: what I have already said is more than sufficient, if your zeal is equal to my wishes for your improvement. I hope you will sincerely inform me whether I have explained clearly thus far; that you will accept of my respects, which I likewise beg of you to present to the Princess, to Signora Teresa, and to Signora Clara, for all whom I have a sincere regard; and believe me to be, with great affection,

"Your obedient and most humble servant,

"Giuseppe Tartini."

Regina Schlick, wife of a noted German Violoncellist and Composer, was celebrated under her maiden name of Sacchi, as well as afterwards, for her performance on the violin. She was born at Mantua in 1764, and received her musical education at the *Conservatorio*

della Pietà, at Venice. She afterwards passed some years at Paris. This lady was a particular friend of Mozart's, and, being in Vienna, about the year 1786, solicited the great composer to write something for their joint performance at her concert. With his usual kindness, Mozart promised to comply with her request, and, accordingly, composed and arranged in his mind the beautiful Sonata for the piano and violin, in B flat minor, with its solemn adagio introduction. But it was necessary to go from *mind* to *matter*—that is, to put the combined ideas into visible form, in the usual way. The destined day approached, and not a note was committed to paper! The anxiety of Madame Schlick became excessive, and, at length, the earnestness of her entreaties was such, that Mozart could no longer procrastinate. But his favorite and seductive game of billiards came in the way; and it was only the very evening before the concert, that he sent her the manuscript, in order that she might study it by the following afternoon. Happy to obtain the treasure, though so late, she scarcely quitted it for a moment's repose. The concert commenced: the Court was present, and the rooms were crowded with the rank and fashion of Vienna. The sonata began; the composition was beautiful, and the execution of the two artists perfect in every respect. The audience was all rapture—the applause enthusiastic: but there was one distinguished personage in the room, whose enjoyment exceeded that of all the other auditors—the Emperor Joseph II, who, in his box, just over the heads of the performers, using his opera-glass to look at Mozart, perceived that there was nothing upon his music-desk but a sheet of white paper! At the conclusion of the concert, the Emperor beckoned Mozart to

his box, and said to him, in a half-whisper, "So, Mozart, you have once again trusted to chance!"—"Yes, your Majesty," replied the composer, with a smile that was half triumph and half confusion. Had Mozart—not *studied*—but merely *played over*, this music *once* with the lady, it would not have been so wonderful: but he had never even heard the Sonata *with* the violin*.

Louise Gautherot, a Frenchwoman, was also distinguished on this instrument. In 1789 and 1790, she performed concertos at the London Oratorios, making great impression by the fine ability she manifested. In referring to this lady's professional achievements, one of those who refuse to consider violin-playing as "an excellent thing in woman," has indulged in the following remarks: "It is said, by fabulous writers, that Minerva, happening to look into a stream whilst playing her favorite instrument, the flute, and perceiving the distortion of countenance it occasioned, was so much disgusted, that she cast it away, and dashed it to pieces! Although I would not recommend, to any lady playing on a valuable Cremona fiddle, to follow the example of the goddess, yet it strikes me that, if she is desirous of enrapturing her audience, she should display her talent in a situation where there is only just light enough to make darkness visible."—Shall we reply, ladies, to a detractor who is forced to seek support for his opinions in "fabulous writers," and, even then, drags forward that which is no parallel case? Nay, nay, let him pass! Let him retire into the darkness which he so unwarrantably recommends to others!

Luigia Gerbini, who ranks among the pupils of

* Anecdotes of Mozart, by Frederic Rochlitz.

Viotti, attained considerable credit as a performer. In 1799, her execution of some violin concertos, between the acts, at the Italian Theatre in Lisbon, was attended with marked success; as were afterwards her vocal exertions at the same Theatre. This lady visited Madrid in 1801; and, some years later, gave evidence of her instrumental talent at some public concerts in London.

Signora Paravicini, another pupil of Viotti's, earned a widely spread fame as a violinist. At Milan, where various fêtes were given in celebration of the battle of Lodi, the wife of Bonaparte was very favorably impressed, during one of these, by the talents of Madame Paravicini. Josephine, a woman of generosity as well as taste, became the patroness of this lady, engaged her to instruct her son, Eugène Beauharnois, and afterwards took her to Paris. However, for some reason not publicly known, Madame Paravicini was, after a time, neglected by Josephine; in consequence of which, and of other misfortunes, she became so distressed in her circumstances, as to be compelled to live on the money produced by the sale of her wearing-apparel. Driven at last to the utmost exigence, she had no remaining resource, except that of applying to the benevolence of the Italians then in Paris, who enabled her to redeem her clothes, and return to Milan. There, her abilities again procured her competence and credit. Her performance was much admired also at Vienna, where, in 1827, she

"Flourished her *bow*, and showed how *fame* was won."

According to the report which travelled in her favour from thence, she evinced a full and pure tone—a touch possessing the solidity and decision of the excellent school in which were formed a Kreutzer and a Lafont—and a mode of bowing so graceful, as to triumph over all pre-

conceived ideas of the awkwardness of the instrument in a female hand. Madame Paravicini, in the course of her professional migrations, was performing at Bologna in the year 1832.

Catarina Calcagno, born at Genoa in 1797, received, as a child, some instructions from the potential Paganini; and, at the age of fifteen, astonished Italy by the fearless freedom of her play—but seems to have left no traces of her career, beyond the year 1816.

Madame Krahmen, in 1824, executed a violin concerto of Viotti's, with great spirit and effect, at a concert in Vienna. At Prague, in the same year, a young lady named Schulz gave public delight as a violin performer. Mademoiselle Eleanora Neumann, of Moscow, pupil of Professsor Morandi, also astonished the public in like manner at Prague, and at Vienna, when she had scarcely reached her tenth year! She is said to have treated the instrument with great effect, and with a precision and purity of tone not always to be found in those "children of *larger* growth" who are content to substitute feats of skill, in place of these essential requisites.

Madame Filipowicz, of Polish derivation, has given us evidence, in London, not many years since, of the success with which feminine sway *may* be exercised over the most difficult of instruments.

The instances I have thus brought forward will probably be deemed sufficient—*else* were it easy to go backward again in date, and to mention Horace Walpole's visit to St. Cyr, in one of the apartments of which serious establishment, he beheld the young ladies dancing minuets and country-dances, while a nun, albeit "not quite so able as St. Cecilia," played on the violin!—Or, I might allude to the threefold

musical genius of Mrs. Sarah Ottey, who, in 1721—22, frequently performed solos at concerts, on the harpsichord, violin, and base-viol! Enough, however, has been produced, to shew "quid femina possit"—what the fair sex *can* achieve, upon the first and most fascinating of instruments.

THE END.

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WORKS FOR VIOLINISTS.

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